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ABSTRACT

Papers on applied linguistics and language pedagogy include: "Non-Exact Quantification in Slide Presentations of Medical Research" (Ron Howard); "Modality and Point of View: A Contrastive Analysis of Japanese Wartime and Peacetime Newspaper Discourse" (Noriko Iwamoto); "Classroom Transcripts and 'Noticing' in Teacher Education" (Tony Lynch); "Questions of Presentation: Evaluating Success in EAP Seminar Skills Classes" (Tony Lynch); "Butterflies in the Rain Forest? Ethnography and the Business English Student" (Jill Northcott and Gillian Brown); "Translator, Traitor, Source of Data: Translations of 'Foreign Phrases' as an Awareness-Raising Exercise" (Brian Parkinson); "To Code or Not To Code?" (Brian Parkinson, Parveen Sandhu, Manel Lacorte, Lesley Gourlay); and "Ewebuation" (Joan-Tomas Pujola). (MSE)

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Preface

EWPAL provides an annual update on some of the work being carried out in applied linguistics and language pedagogy by students and staff of the Department of Applied Linguistics and Institute for Applied Language Studies, both in the University of Edinburgh. This year there are six papers by IALS staff, one from DAL, and one joint effort. No one issue of EWPAL is likely to reflect all research and development interests of the two institutions, but this one samples **some** of our major concerns - classroom language (Lynch), qualitative research methods (both co-authored papers), discourse analysis (Iwamoto) and language description to inform EAP (Howard). We also surf the latest technological wave (Pujolà) and regress to the nineteenth century and beyond (Parkinson).

As usual I would like to thank the 'readers' who have found time to comment on manuscripts submitted. These have included Kenneth Anderson, Cathy Benson, Sheena Davies, Gibson Ferguson, Martin Gill, Eric Glendinning, Jim Hutton, Tony Lynch and Hugh Trappes-Lomax.

Thanks also go to Michele Bain for turning contributors' 'final' versions into these published papers, and to Alan White and his colleagues at the University Printing Office, who have taken over the final stage of production.

Brian Parkinson

May 1998

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Contributors' and editor's addresses appear at the end of this volume

NON-EXACT QUANTIFICATION IN SLIDE PRESENTATIONS OF MEDICAL RESEARCH

Ron Howard (IALS)

Abstract

This paper examines the way clinicians speak about numbers in orally presenting the results of research. Presentations by a sample of eight physicians and surgeons were selected, and the manner in which numerical data on slides were referred to was analysed. Overall in the sample, it was four times more common to speak about data on slides in one of several non-exact ways than to mention them exactly. Non-exact reference appears to have several different functions in these presentations, notably to highlight significant data for the audience. I suggest it is also used to convert evidential truth to interpreted truth (Skelton, 1997). The former function is probably more common in the presentation of original research, the latter in overview-type presentations. In this sample, younger doctors used more unsignalled approximation than their older peers, who in turn used more non-numeric reference, e.g. quantifiers such as 'a large number'. To some extent these differences reflect the type of presentation given, but they may also be associated with the experience of the speaker.

1. Introduction

The importance of quantification in discourse has been noted by Kennedy (1987) who, in a study of two written texts (an issue of *Newsweek* and a geography textbook), found that 14.46 per cent of the words expressed quantity or degree. One of the most intriguing aspects of this area of language is the use of non-exact quantification[1]. A number of linguists have studied non-exact language, including Channell (1994), who devotes part of her book on *Vague Language* to the subject[2], and who concludes:

> While more work is needed, it begins to look as though vagueness occurs as much or more than precision. It clearly is not the case that most language use is precise, with vagueness being occasionally appropriate. (Channell 1994:195)

Non-exact quantification occurs in scientific discourse as well as in ordinary day-to-day communication. Prince and her co-workers found that in their recordings of medical ward rounds there was 'more than one hedge every fifteen seconds' (Prince, Frader & Bosk 1982:84)[3]. Dubois analysed 52 talks from an international biomedical conference. She also found that non-exact quantification was common: 'There is much measuring, but with results often presented in strikingly casual form' (Dubois 1987: 529).

Non-exact quantification is therefore something that should concern the EST practitioner, and yet scant attention is paid to the subject in textbooks for second language learners. This may be because other matters are judged to have priority, or, as Channell notes, because there is still a belief that 'vagueness, ambiguity, imprecision, and general woolliness are to be avoided' (Channell 1994:1), or even that to be non-exact in science is to be dishonest. The prevalence of non-exact language argues against such beliefs. Forty-two of the speakers in Dubois' study used non-exact quantification ('hedged' is her term[4]), while ten did not. However, she notes that 'some avoid hedges by the simple act of not repeating the numbers projected by slide onto the screen, commenting instead through such relational expressions as *higher*, *lower*, *same*, *longer*, *shorter*' (Dubois 1987: 535). Since this manner

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of referring to numbers is also non-exact, it seems likely that all of her speakers made use of non-exact quantification. Unfortunately, she does not indicate *how much* each of the 42 hedged.

Dubois largely confined her attention to approximation which was signalled by a variety of linguistic devices including *about*. The present study examines the way a group of native-speaker doctors used non-exact language in reporting the results of research. In particular, it determines the ratio of exact to non-exact quantification used, including cases of unsignalled approximation by comparing data on slides with the way the speakers report those data. It also identifies the language expressions used by the speakers for non-exact quantification, and explores the reasons motivating the choices of those expressions.

2. The presentations

Six slide presentations which had been previously recorded on videotape for various pedagogic and research purposes were collected. The visibility of slides in these recordings (see section 3.1) ranges from 95% (Speaker A) to 18% (Speaker G). Two short audio recordings, for one of which a duplicate set of slides was available, were added to the six video recordings. All the recordings were made in or near Edinburgh; five of the speakers were working in Scotland (B, C, E, F, and H) and three in England (A, D and G) at the time of the presentations.

I make no strong claim of representativeness for my sample. However, given the difficulty of acquiring this type of data, it seemed worthwhile making use of what was available. The eight speakers (all male) range from the experienced (Speakers A and D) to the relatively inexperienced (Speakers B, E and F)[3]. Speakers E and F were recorded at a rehearsal session during which they received feedback from more experienced colleagues. Four of the recordings were made at two genuine meetings; two were recorded in a studio, one after and the other before a conference. The presentations in the sample are of two types: reports of original research (A, B, E, F and H), and presentations in which the speaker attempts to provide an overview of a particular area for specialists or trainee specialists. In the latter case (C, D and G), data from a number of studies, including the speaker's own, are presented on slides. Table 1 gives details of the eight presentations.

Table 1: The presentations

Speaker	Venue	Mode	Genre	Status	Speciality	Length (words)	Length (mins)	Date
A	Studio (post-conference)	video	Research paper	Senior lecturer	Paediatrics	2506	20	1989
B	Studio (pre-conference)	video	Research paper	Registrar	Paediatrics	1681	15	1989
C	Meeting	video	Post-graduate lecture	Senior lecturer	Oncology	4658	30	1996
D	Meeting	video	Post-graduate lecture	Consultant	Oncology	3359	30	1996
E	Rehearsal	audio + slides	Research paper	Senior House Officer	Surgery	869	6	1985
F	Rehearsal	audio	Research paper	Senior House Officer	Surgery	930	7	1985
G	Meeting	video	Overview	Senior lecturer	Psychiatry	4241	30	1992
H	Meeting	video	Research paper	Consultant	Psychiatry	3503	30	1992

3. Data sampling

3.1 Criteria for inclusion

Quantifying expressions referring to the results of research presented on slides were extracted from the talks and entered into a database. Each expression was given an identifying number made up as follows: a letter from A to H indicating the speaker (see Table 1), a number representing the slide referred to and a decimal number indicating order of utterance. Thus C14.04 represents the fourth expression used by Speaker C in referring to his 14th slide.

Kennedy (1987:268) used as the main criterion for inclusion in his study of quantifying expressions 'whether a particular linguistic device in context answered the question *How many/how much/to what extent*?'. This is not as simple as it might seem. Numbers are straightforward, and they were all included together with an approximator if there was one, e.g. *about 4 or 5* (A02.03). But should one include *very elderly* in *What you can see is that this population were very elderly* (H05.01)?

Since the aim of the study was to examine the way speakers report data that appear on their slides, I was able to avoid many such difficult decisions. I included all expressions which clearly refer to visible data. Thus, *very elderly* was included because it refers to a slide which shows the mean age of subjects as 58.6. However, I also included some expressions referring to data which are not visible. Of the total of 376 expressions, 161 refer to data which are not on a slide or are not visible because the slide cannot be clearly seen on the video tape or because the slide itself does not show the data in a precise numerical form (speaker E)[4] or because no visual record is available (speaker F). These 161 expressions include 16 signalled approximations and 78 other overtly non-exact expressions, e.g. *a rather higher number* (F28). In 64 out of 161 instances it was impossible to verify the status of the expression.

3.2 Categorisation

Data were categorised as follows:

A. **Numeric**

A.1 **Exact** reference: the speaker says the exact number shown on a slide[5], e.g. *109 [...] of the total figure was seen in 1988* (B02.03). Where the slide was not visible, numeric expressions were categorised as unknown, unless internal evidence permitted categorisation, e.g. *The pregnancy was a twin pregnancy: one twin was affected by severe spina bifida and the other was normal and healthy. One (twin)* was categorised as an exact numeric (A13.08) and *the other* (A13.09) as an exact non-numeric expression. In some cases, a number which was visible on the slide was not considered to be exact. Some of these are categorised as unsignalled non-exact, and some as unknown. (See A2.2 and C.)

A.2 **Non-exact** reference, or **approximation**, where the speaker refers to the amount or quantity using a rounded number. This is sub-divided into

A.2.1 **Signalled**: the speaker uses one of the set of approximators, e.g. *about*

A.2.2 **Unsignalled**: the speaker gives no indication that he is approximating[6].

B. **Non-numeric**

B.1 **Exact** reference: the speaker refers to the amount or quantity in a non-numeric way, using one of a small set of expressions (*all*, *both*, *not... a single*, *not... any more*, *the other*, *the only*, and *another*) which can be used to imply an exact number. There were only nine such cases.

B.2 **Non-exact** reference: the speaker uses a quantifier, e.g. *many of these* (A05.04), or some other expression, e.g. *very elderly* (H05.01). Adverbs of frequency were not included. Non-exact non-numeric reference is also subdivided into

B.2.1 **signalled**: the speaker uses one of the set of approximators. There are only three instances of this: *less than a handful of* [B07.02]; *at least a couple of* [G19.03]; *almost all* [H15.07].

B.2.2 **unsignalled**: the speaker does not use an approximator.

C. **Unknown**: the speaker refers to an amount or quantity using a number for which there is no evidence of accuracy, either directly from a slide or by calculation. The items in this category must, by exclusion, be either exact quantities or unsignalled approximations. The bulk of these expressions refer to data which are not visible on slides, but there are 14 expressions referring to visible data which are of doubtful exactness: 11 of them are percentages, one a common fraction, and the other two average ages (see section 10).

4. Presenting results

Speakers present the results of their research in one or more ways corresponding to the categories in Section 3. I will first consider the relative frequency of the techniques used in the sample and then examine each one in more detail.

Table 2: Speakers' Techniques in Presenting Results

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	TOTAL
NUMERIC									
Exact (A1)	22	6	3	0	15	0	0	4	50
Non-exact (A2)	12	18	8	4	15	2	4	8	71
NON-NUMERIC									
Exact (B1)	4	1	0	0	1	1*	0	1	8
Non-exact (B2)	17	22	19	26	0	9	38	38	169
UNKNOWN (C)	1	13	7	0	14	27	4	12	78
TOTAL	56	60	37	30	45	39	46	63	376

There were 376 references to the results of research, of which 78 (20%) had to be categorised as unknown. Table 2 shows that there was considerable variation in the way speakers presented these results. Speaker A, a senior doctor presenting original research, was non-exact (categories A2 + B2) a little more than half the time, while D and G, who were both presenting overviews, were always or virtually always non-exact. Slides were not available in the case of F, but the probability is that 13 of the unknown category expressions he used were exact and 14 were unsignalled approximations[10], which would mean he used non-exact language 64% of the time. Of the unknown category for B and E, 6 and 11 expressions respectively seem likely to be approximations (non-exact numeric expressions). This would mean that B and E, both relatively inexperienced doctors presenting original research, were non-exact 76% and 60% of the time respectively. Depending on whether the unknown

category expressions for C and H were exact or non-exact, these two speakers were non-exact overall between 70 and 90% of the time. This puts the speakers in the following order with respect to use of non-exact language:

Table 3: Non-exact reference (numeric + non-numeric)

Speaker	Non-exact (%)
A	52
E	57
F	64
B	76
H	78-90
C	73-92
G	91-100
D	100

The first four speakers in this list were presenting original research, while the last three were presenting an overview of recent research in their particular area. Speaker H also presented his own research, but he spent more time than the A, B, E and F reviewing previous research.

When being non-exact, all speakers except E and F (the most junior doctors) used more non-numeric than numeric reference. Speakers B and A used only slightly more. A, B, E and F were presenting their own data, whereas C, D and G were presenting an overview[11]. Again, H was somewhat intermediate between the two groups.

In the following sections, each category of non-exact language is examined in turn.

5. Exact reference

Exact reference can involve whole numbers, decimals, fractions and percentages. One might expect that decimals, because of their precision, would predominate in medical presentations. In fact, in this whole series only one decimal was spoken, (in the introduction to a talk, not in the presentation of results), and it was an estimate: *a population of about 3.1 million people* (A03.01). With regard to spoken fractions and percentages, I will show that these are nearly always approximations (sections 8 and 10). Consequently, exact reference in this series involves whole numbers, plus nine non-numeric expressions such as *both* (See Section 3.2).

Not surprisingly, the reference is almost always exact when the number is small (<10). In the presentation of results, there are 37 references to numbers less than ten, and only five of these are approximations. On the other hand, of the 31 references to integers greater than ten, 15 are approximations, 11 of them signalled.

Table 4: Whole numbers

	Exact	Approximation	Total
<10	32	5	37
>10	16	15	31
Total	48	20	68

6. Non-exact numeric reference, or Approximation

Non-exact numeric reference may or may not be signalled by an approximator. Unsignalled rounding has been identified in this study by referring to the slide, which gives either a precise number, or a number from which a precise calculation can be made. Table 4 shows that, overall, unsignalled approximation was used at least 50% of the time, although there was considerable variation in the ratio among the different speakers.

Table 5: Use of approximation in the presentation of results[13]

Speaker	Signalled	Unsignalled	Total	% Signalled
D	4	0	4	100
G	2	0	2	100
C	5	3	8	62
A	7	5	12	58
H	4	4	8	50
B	8	10	18	44
E	3	12	15	20
F	2	0	2	100
Total	35	34	69	50

If the unknown category is taken into account (Section 4), speaker F actually used unsignalled approximation 14 times. Thus, the two most junior speakers (E and F) used more unsignalled than signalled approximation. A, B and H used roughly equal amounts of the two forms. Once again this seems to relate to the type of presentation, but in addition the ranking suggests a possible correlation with experience, A and D being the most and E and F the least experienced.

7. Approximators

Signalled approximation involves the use of one or more of a set of expressions called approximators. Approximators are generally used with a rounded number but can also be used with non-numeric expressions[14].

Kennedy (1987: 276-278) lists 144 approximators, but admits that his list is probably not exhaustive. Surprisingly, it does not contain the set *over, just above, just under, more than,* or *less than,* nor *a matter of,* all of which were used by the speakers in this study. There were 21 different approximators in the results section of these presentations, some of which are used in variant forms with what I take to be the same or similar meaning (*between / somewhere between*) and some of which have variants with slightly different meanings (*over / well over* versus *only just over*). An additional nine approximators were used in the non-results parts of the presentations.

I divide approximators into three groups: *neutral* approximators, such as *about*; and *maximising* and *minimising* approximators. A maximising approximator, such as *nearly*, is one which seems to

indicate that the speaker thinks this is a large number, or "is more than one would expect" (Wierzbicka 1986: 610). A minimising approximator, such as *less than*, suggests the opposite. The addition of *only* to an approximator has a 'downgrading' effect, e.g. changing *about* from neutral to minimising, while *just* has a 'reversing' effect, e.g. changing *under* from minimising to maximising (*just under*), and *over* from maximising to minimising (*just over*). There is one example of the use of both *only* and *just* (*only just over*), which I classify as minimising.

Of the approximators used in this small sample, Table 5 shows that *about* was the most popular, (9 occurrences), with only one or two examples each of other neutral expressions. Maximising expressions were also fairly popular: *almost* (6), *over* (4), *nearly* (4). Minimising expressions were used less. The numbers are too small for cross-speaker comparison.

Table 6: Approximators used in the presentation of results

Neutral (n=19)	**Maximising** (n=17)	**Minimising** (n=6)
(around) about (7)		only about (2)
	almost (6)	
approximately (1)		
around (1)		
	at least (1)	
(somewhere) between (2)		
(from) ... to .... (1)		
in the region of (1)		
	just under (1)	just above (1)
		less than (1)
	more than (1)	
	nearly (4)	
... or .... (1)		
	over/well over (4)	(only) just over (2)
roughly (1)		
some (2)		
something like (1)		
somewhat (1)		

Some linguists (e.g. Wierzbicka 1986) have attempted to make fine distinctions between different approximators. Although this sample is small, it gives the impression that choice of expression is more a question of individual style than semantic nicety. *About* is often used with periods of time: *about 6 months*; *about two years ago*; *about 22 years*. *Approximately* is used only once in the presentation of results and twice in other parts of the presentations, but each time in a fairly loose way, not at all confirming Wierzbicka's claim that, in contrast to *about*, it reveals 'a respect for precision even at times when the speaker feels precision is not called for' (Wierzbicka 1986: 604)" *Nearly* is used with fractions 3 times out of 4, but these instances are all from the same speaker (A). Other examples of a speaker appearing to favour one particular approximator are *some* (F) and *something like* (G). A is the only one to use the more formal expressions *in the region of* and *of the order of*.

8. Unsignalled approximation

Speakers may round integers without signalling that they are doing so. There are only three instances of this in my data: *It's interesting* [...] *that in 300 cases* [B07.01: *290 cases* on the slide]." *They can quote on 1530 patients* [C16.02: *1526 patients* on the slide]; and *700 patients*" [C25.01: *716* on the

slide]. F gives the population of two primary schools as 500 each and of two secondary schools 1000 each. Channell (1994: 78) calls such approximation *inherent* (See also Means, Section 9).

Unsignalled rounding of percentages is much more common, as I have already suggested. In one case the speaker rounds a percentage given exactly on the slide: [A12.01] *25 per cent were not suspected antenatally* (25.6% on the slide), but in many more one can establish the approximation by calculation. Percentages account for 24 of the 34 (70%) cases of unsignalled approximation (See Section 10).

9. Means

Means are widely used in science. In this series of presentations, however, they are relatively uncommon. Speaker H's paper is an exception: his research involves scores on a variety of psychological tests and he refers to means seven times. Three other speakers (D, E and F) report a mean once or twice[8]. Speaker G does not use the word *mean*, but some of his data are obviously means, given that they are shown with standard deviations. A, B and C do not speak about means at all.

Almost invariably, means are expressed, on paper, as decimals to at least one place. A striking feature of this sample, as noted above (Section 5), is that decimal numbers are almost never spoken in presenting results, even though they appear on slides. Thus, the means here are always rounded: IQ *around about a hundred* (H07.02x: *97.4* and *100.8* on the slide); *a mean of three words* (H14.3x: *2.6 words* on the slide). The approximation may be signalled, or unsignalled.

10. Percentages

There are 63 percentages in the presentation of results. Only one is certainly exact: 4 out of 8 patients = 50%, (A06.05). Two other figures of 50% are suspect since the speaker (E) is referring to a group of 134 patients, and it seems improbable that exactly 67 were diagnosed correctly and 67 incorrectly.

Thirteen of the remaining percentages are signalled approximations. In two cases (A19.01 and B08.04) the speakers signal that they are approximating but appear to be giving an exact figure. In other cases the approximation is confirmed by looking at the slide, e.g. speaker A rounds 71.7% to *around 70%* (A09.02), B rounds 52-65% to *somewhere between 55%, 65%* (B12.01).

Speaker A silently rounds 25.6% on the slide to 25% (A12.01), but even where a percentage is not given on the slide a simple calculation often shows that rounding has taken place. Thus, slide B09 shows that 16 out of 30 patients (53.3%) had a rectal examination, whereas the speaker says 53% (B09.04). Speaker F claims that 18% of 151 accidents resulted in head injury. This would mean 27.18 head injuries; since 0.18 of a head injury is not possible, there must have been 27 (17.9%) or 28 (18.5%), and therefore 18% must be an approximation. By such calculations, I arrive at a figure of 24 unsignalled approximations of percentages, equivalent to 70.6%, or 71%, of the unsignalled approximations. It is very probable that percentages classified as Unknown are also in most cases unsignalled approximations.

Channell notes that percentages are often used as inherent approximations (Channell 1994: 79); similarly, Dubois writes that 'unhedged' percents can be rounded (Dubois 1987: 537). This is probably something that is taken for granted by the scientific community. One manual for writers (Matthews, Bowen & Matthews 1996: 92) states that authorities 'recommend that you use decimals in percentages in series only when the percentages are based on more than 1000 subjects.' Since almost none of the data in my sample involve such a large cohort, it could be that the speakers are following this dictum. Paradoxically, they are being more precise by avoiding 'exact' numbers.

There is again individual variation in the use of percentages (Table 6): B and E use them frequently. On the other hand, D, G and H hardly use them at all.

Table 7: Use of percentages in the presentation of results

Speaker	Exact	Signalled	Unsignalled	Unknown	Total	Unsignalled + Unknown
A	1	3	5	0	9	5
B	0	4	8	5	17	13
C	0	2	2	6	10	8
D	0	2	0	0	2	0
E	0	0	9	6	15	15
F	0	2	0	6	8	6
G	0	0	0	0	0	0
H	0	0	0	2	2	2
Total	1	13	28	21	63	47

Speaker E, who never marks his percentages as approximations, also uses pie charts and bar charts in his presentation.

11. Fractions

Much of what has been said of percentages applies also to fractions[14], although they are less common: 19 instances. All speakers except H use at least one in their presentation. The most common fraction is *half* with 9 occurrences (See Table 7). In nine cases (47%), the fraction is used with an approximator: *nearly* (3), *just under* (1), *almost* (1), *just over* (1), *about* (1), *roughly* (1), *something like* (1), *or so* (1). Speaker A converts percentages on his slides to fractions on six occasions.

Table 8: Use of fractions

Fraction	No. of occurrences
1/2	9
1/4	2
3/4	3
1/3	1
2/3	2
1/5	1
4/5	1
Total	19

12. Non-numeric reference

Table 2 shows that overall the speakers in this sample were twice as likely to use non-numeric as numeric non-exact reference. There was of course individual variation. The adjusted figures proposed in Section 4 mean that Speakers E and F (the least experienced) used considerably more approximation than non-numeric reference - they were presenting their own research exclusively. Speaker A (one of the more experienced), who was also presenting only his own research, used slightly less approximation than non-numeric reference. Speaker B used roughly the same amount of each (24:22). Speakers C, D and G favoured non-numeric expressions: they were presenting mixed research. Speaker H presented mainly his own research, but he also referred to the results of other researchers.

Table 9: Non-numeric reference versus approximation

	Non-numeric	Approximation
D	26	4
G	40	2
H	41	8
C	19	8
B	22	24
A	17	12
F	9	*16
E	1	15

*adjusted figure (see Section 4)

The expressions used include quantifiers (and determiners) such as *many*, *a large number of*, etc., as well as a heterogeneous group of other expressions, especially comparatives, and nouns and verbs expressing change in amount or quantity (*reduction*, *increase*, etc.).

12.1 Quantifiers

About twenty-five different quantifiers were used. Like approximators, quantifiers can be divided into neutral, maximising and minimising.

Table 10: Quantifiers used in the presentations

Neutral (n=9)	**Maximising** (n=18)	**Minimising** (n=11)
some (2)	many (1)	not very many (1)
several (1)	a lot more (1)	very little (1)
a couple of (1)	most of (8)	(very very) few (2)
the first few (1)	the (vast) majority (2)	the (very) few (2)
a number of (2)	a large number (1)	lower numbers of (1)
	quite a (significant) number (2)	a small number of (1)
not all (1)	a surprisingly high number of (1)	the very low number of (1)
a group of (1)	a larger group of (1)	a very small group (1)
	a higher proportion (1)	a very small proportion (1)

Table 11: Proportion of the three types of quantifier used by each speaker

	Neutral	Maximising	Minimising	Max. + Min.	Total
A	2	10	3	13	15
B	1	2	0	2	3
C	0	0	1	1	1
D	1	2	1	3	4
E	0	0	0	0	0
F	0	1	0	1	1
G	4	3	4	7	11
H	1	0	2	2	3
Total	9	18	11	29	38

Speaker A stands out, being responsible for 10 out of the 18 instances of maximising quantifiers - seven of these are *most of*. He uses this expression for the following proportions: 6 out of 12, 4 out 8, 4 out of 7, 30 out of 63. In one case there is nothing on the slide, and once the word *most* itself is there. Only in the remaining case (21/22,) does the use of *most of* seem justified.

12.2 Other expressions

Much of the research carried out by the doctors in this series involves comparing an experimental group and a control group. For example, Speaker D says with reference to the data in Figure 1: *there are also significantly fewer [deaths from anal cancer] in patients receiving a combined modality treatment than those treated by radiotherapy alone* (D27.01).

Fig 1: Extract from Slide D27 - Causes of Death

Cause	RT*	CMT**
Anal cancer	105	77

* radiotherapy ** combined modality treatment

In the eight papers, *higher* occurs nine times and *lower* four.

Another major type of research method involves making the same measurement before and after an intervention such as the administration of a drug. In some cases, a control group is used as surrogate for the 'before' group. The results of this type of research are often expressed with the language of change: *no difference, increase, reduction* being especially common. Speaker G, for example, refers to his 13th slide (Fig 2)[iii] as follows: *And here is an example of that in Huntington's Disease [HD], where there is an increase in 5HT* (G13.02). Later, he says: *There is in fact an overall increase in the ratio of metabolites, 5HIAA* (G13.03).

Fig 2: Extract from Slide G13

	5HT	5HIAA	Ratio
Controls	320 ±	794 ±	2.49 ±
HD	632 ±	1864 ±	3.18 ±

Note: The standard deviations are not clearly visible.

13. Functions of non-exact reference

The six doctors in this sample clearly use a great deal of non-exact language: those presenting an overview more than those presenting original research (73-100% vs. 52-90%)(Table 3, Section 4). Channell (1994: 194) lists ten possible reasons for the use of 'vague' language:

1. Giving the right amount of information (cf. Grice's Maxim of Quantity)
2. Deliberately withholding information (for reasons other than to conform to the Maxim of Quantity)
3. Using language persuasively
4. Lexical gaps (i.e. not being able to find the right word)

5. Lacking specific information (e.g. lacking the exact number)

6. Displacement (i.e. speaking about numbers which are intrinsically uncertain, as in predictions)

7. Self-protection

8. Power and politeness

9. Informality and atmosphere

10. Women's language.

The fifth reason - being vague because the exact quantity is unknown to the speaker - is not relevant here, because this study focuses on references to data present on slides, but it is valid in other parts of the presentations, as when Speaker A says in his introduction: *The total number of congenital abnormalities which probably occur is probably of the order of 3 per cent* (A05.03). As all the speakers were male, the tenth reason is obviously not applicable either.

Of the remaining reasons for vague language, two seem particularly important with respect to the use of non-exact reference in the oral presentation of research results, namely giving the right amount of information and using language persuasively. If the first were not a guiding principle, speakers would repeat each and every number on the slides, whereas they are highly selective[21]. It is not only how many data but also the form of presentation of the data that has to be controlled: undue accuracy also infringes the Maxim of Quantity. This is seen particularly in the rounding of decimal numbers.

This avoidance of information overload merges with the function of using language persuasively. The overlap area consists in the highlighting of data which the speaker believes to be important. One way of doing this is to avoid mentioning less important data (observing the Maxim of Quantity); another is to make it easier to process the important data. A rounded number is easier to process than a decimal, for example. The use of non-numeric reference also make data more salient. As Zeiger (1991: 141) in a manual for biomedical writers puts it: 'Data can rarely stand alone. The result (= the message) must be stated to make the point clear, state the result first and then present the data'. The speakers in this sample sometimes present data in two forms, exact and non-exact, numeric and non-numeric e.g. *only 13 and a half percent actually came to operation, which is a very small proportion of the total number* (A14.01); *Interestingly enough, 109 or 30% of the total figure was seen in 1988* (B02.03); *only 25% or a quarter* (B06.07); *79, nearly 80%* (B06.08); *a statistically significant effect [...] an 8% improvement* (C07.06); *19% or roughly one in five* (E04.01); *a very small group [...] 4 or 5* (G12.05); *no difference - around about 100* (H07.02).

One of the doctors in the post mortem of E's talk says: "You must emphasise the points, otherwise it gets, tends to be a bit monotonous". Another recommends the use of *only* and converts E's 60% to *about two thirds*.

These data show that the speakers use what I have called maximising and minimising expressions more often than neutral ones, especially in the case of quantifiers (Tables 6 and 10). Speaker D says: *Only about 55% of patients managed by radical surgery are going to be survivors* (D12.01), and later he makes his point even clearer when he says: *you can see that the survival rate is very poor indeed* (D13.01).

One of Channell's informants puts it: "It's to my advantage to make that number as high as possible" (Channell 1994: 179)[22]. Channell herself says: "vague expressions of quantity are used to present statistical data in a way which favours the argument of the author, but still conforms to academic conventions of truthfulness in presentation of data" (op. cit.:180).

So, far from being slapdash, non-exact reference is usually a deliberate strategy for drawing attention to data and persuading the listener that they are important. Speakers have the option of rounding with or without a marker, of using a whole number, a percentage or a fraction, and of expressing the quantity non-numerically. The factors that determine the choice of the particular mode of expression can only be suggested here. To some extent the use of a neutral marker, such as *about*, in a slide presentation is redundant; it could even be seen as an infringement of the Maxim of Quantity. However, the fact that the precise number is visible on a slide is of course no guarantee that most people in the audience will notice that the speaker has rounded the number in referring to it. I have noted that signalling was more common in the older, more experienced speakers in my sample. It could be that greater experience leads to greater awareness of this fact. Or it may simply be due to chance co-occurrence of age and a particular type of personality. A larger sample of speakers is needed to answer the question.

The preference for non-numeric expressions shown by speakers presenting an overview of research is not due to lack of specific data, since those data are generally on the slides. It seems likely that it is a reflection of their attempt to draw together the results into a generalisation. Thus the use of non-exact language may represent the beginnings of the movement from the specific results of research to generalisation, the movement from evidential truth to interpreted truth (Skelton 1997). Dubois (1987: 539) quotes Ziman (1974) as positing a three-stage model for the production of science: (1) data (empirical work), (2) information (research papers, oral and written) and (3) science (textbook). What appears to be non-exact reference may often be a waystage to generalisation, between empirical work and the textbook. Even when reporting their own research, speakers may wish to make tentative generalisations. This may explain why, in my sample at any rate, the more experienced speakers like A and H tend to use more non-numeric reference than their younger colleagues.

The choice of expression for non-exact quantification could then depend on the strength of the claim to generality being made. The different types of expression may lie on a cline going from the specific to the general (Figure 3).

Figure 3

exact	approximation		quantifier	other	general
109	*about 100*	*over 100*	*a large number*	*an increase*	*improves*
select data	make easy to process	highlight	emphasise	persuade	generalise

The move from exact to non-exact along this cline could be a move from evidential to interpreted truth (Skelton 1997). One of the functions of non-exact language may be to signal this move.

14. Conclusion

I have shown that, in this admittedly small and possibly none too representative sample, the ratio of non-exact to exact language is 4 to 1, that this non-exact language is made up of approximation, signalled or unsignalled with approximators, determiners and quantifiers, and a group of other expressions including comparatives and words expressing unquantified change. I have suggested that the chief functions of this language are probably to highlight what the speaker deems to be important, to persuade the listener of its importance, and to initiate the process of generalising from the particular results of the research to scientific truths. But these are tentative conclusions and a larger sample of both types of presentation needs to be studied, looking at introductions and conclusions as well as at the presentation of results, in order to be confident of their applicability. If they are confirmed, the ESP teacher will then be in a position to point out to learners the function of the different ways of being purposefully non-exact, and thereby help them to improve the quality of their oral presentations.

Acknowledgement

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Notes

1. I deliberately use the term *non-exact* rather than *inexact* or *imprecise* because it seems less pejorative.

2. *Vagueness* is a broader term than non-exact quantification, and includes placeholder names such as *thingumajig* (Channell 1994: 157). There is now an extensive literature on what has been called *purposive vagueness* (Powell 1985). The area I am interested in is a subset of expressions from this field. I give a detailed description of what I mean by non-exact quantification in Section 3.1.

3. Prince et al subdivide hedges into *shields* and *approximators* (Prince et al. 1982: 85-6). I am concerned only with the latter which introduces "fuzziness *within the propositional content* proper" (Ibid. 85). I reserve the term *approximator*, however, for the words and expressions like *about* and *of the order of* which signal that the speaker is being non-exact. Prince et al. counted both types of hedge in their study. On hedging, see also Hyland 1994 and 1996, and Crompton 1997.

4. Dubois uses the term *hedge* only for what Prince et al. call *approximators* (see Note 3 above).

5. This estimate of experience is based on age and professional status.

6. Speaker E's data were presented mainly in the form of bar charts and pie charts.

7. In a few cases, the number on the slide was itself an approximation, in which case the speaker's expression was considered to be non-exact.

8. Even when data were not visible on slides, it was possible in many cases to establish by calculation that a number was rounded. This applies particularly to percentages (see Section 8).

9. F14 *both (groups)*: the two groups were named earlier.

10. The population of two primary schools is said to have been 500 [F03]. It seems highly unlikely that one school would have a population of exactly 500, let alone two. Similarly, two secondary schools are said to have a population of 1000 [F05]. Speaker F states that the total number of accidents was 151 [F09]. Assuming that this number is exact, the statement that *62% of the accidents were in males* [F11] must be non-exact, since 62% of 151 is not a whole number. Similarly for other percentages. He also gives the mean number of accidents for winter and summer as whole numbers [F12 and F13], which cannot be exact.

11. This is not necessarily because the latter lack precise data - they are non-exact even when the precise figures are available on the slide - but it may be partly due to relative lack of familiarity with the data.

12. This does not include Unknown category expressions, although as already noted (Section 4), these probably include 14 cases of unsignalled approximation in the case of Speaker F.

13. See previous note.

14. In this series the following expressions occur: *almost all, essentially all, less than a handful, about the same, about what is usually ..., at least a couple of, more than twofold, well over twofold, to somewhat less an extent*.

15. According to Roberts (1960: 17) *approximately* "should be reserved for fine ranges of uncertainty, especially those that are measured. For large and vague ranges *about* is preferable." Other authors (O'Connor, 1991: 210; Lock, 1977: 108) advocate avoidance of *approximately*.

16. Admittedly, he has already twice referred to the number as *almost 300*.

17 Discussing method

18 H uses the word *mean* itself. D and E use *average*. F uses *average* once and *mean* twice.

19 Expressions such as 'one in four' have been counted as fractions.

20 The implication is that there is an association between HD and the increase in 5HT, the control group being assumed to have the levels that HD patients would have had before developing the disease.

21 In a preliminary study of Speaker A's paper, I calculated that he referred to only 57 of the 200 data on his slides, and this is probably an unusually high proportion.

22 Goodman & Edwards (1991: 17) urge writers to avoid presenting 'numerical observations in a favourable light.' This prescription like many others is less appropriate for speakers.

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MODALITY AND POINT OF VIEW: A CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS OF JAPANESE WARTIME AND PEACETIME NEWSPAPER DISCOURSE

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Abstract

This paper demonstrates the existence of a wartime register in Japanese journalism and characterizes its major linguistic and stylistic features. Special emphasis is placed upon the aspect of modality as related to point of view. Modality expresses the mode within which the propositional content of a sentence is presented as certain, reliable, or authoritative, and it functions to regulate interpersonal relations in a language community. Point of view indicates a particular way of conceptualizing and refers to world-view or ideology. In relation to, or as a part of, modal functions, the following issues are considered: point of view, certainty and probability, deontic and epistemic modality, and the use of classical style. To demonstrate the special features of modality in the wartime register, a diachronic comparison is made with texts from peacetime discourse.

1. Introduction

A linguistic study of the wartime propaganda in Japanese newspapers during the Second World War is the main focus of the research investigation. Newspaper genre usually presents itself as being 'neutral', similar to the art of taking photographs in which the camera is said never to lie. However, contrary to our assumption that reporting is objective, such neutrality can often be a surface disguise, especially in the case of wartime propaganda. The reality manifested in wartime newspaper reports is merely a 'representation' (Leech and Short 1981, Fairclough 1989, Halliday 1994) of reality because of the ideological and institutional dimensions involved in creating the text. In wartime discourse, journalism not only plays a significant role in maintaining public morale but is also an active participant in the construction of the war effort. In the Japanese presentation of news, journalistic reports implicitly reconstruct reality by foregrounding death as a sacrifice, as glorious and noble, and the enemy as weak, and by obscuring threatening situations by backgrounding defeats and losses. This reconstruction is done to regulate and control the ideas and behaviour of people, and to form a strong sense of solidarity in the nation. In wartime Japan, as in many countries at war, maintaining public morale was seen as more important than pursuing and reporting the truth. Taketora Ogata, vice-president of Japan's premier newspaper, *The Asahi Newspaper*, later State Minister in charge of the Information Bureau, declared before the Diet that 'an active press was essential for maintaining the fighting spirit of the people' (*The Asahi Newspaper*, 9 September 1944). The mechanism and function of 'an active press', i.e. propaganda, is defined as 'organized persuasion; the spreading of ideas and values through a variety of devices' (Lee and Lee 1939, quoted in Devito 1986: 239). Thus, propaganda is a highly institutionalized and conventionalized mode of presenting discourse so that the leaders of the time can manipulate people's thought and behaviour in a covert way. This can be achieved with remarkable stylistic sophistication. For example, in issuing battle reports, the Japanese army used an inflated bombastic style that included the use of superlative adjectives such as 'the morale of our troops is most vigorous'. The army reports, in general, lacked objectivity because maintenance of public morale was important (Shiba 1978: 7-8). In an 'active press', linguistic resources are exploited to structure, transform, and sometimes mask reality so that newly created discourse can articulate and legitimize new orders of reality that will meet the demands of a particular social situation, such as consolidating the power of the state to wage war. For example, within the framework of transitivity, the register of wartime Japanese journalistic discourse constantly foregrounds the Japanese side as *Agent* (the one who performs a purposeful action) and not as *Patient* (an entity affected by the act of *Agent*), even in defeat in battle, e.g. 'we [*Agent*] made a

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final gallant attack', 'ten enemy battleships [*Patient*] were destroyed', and 'enemy [*Patient*] casualties total 200'. By contrast, in the context of peacetime journalism non-Japanese are often thematized as *Agent* (Iwamoto 1995). This switching of *Agent* and *Patient* and of thematizing in situations of war and peace provides evidence that foregrounding and backgrounding news events is an instrument of state power in a wartime society, while journalism in peacetime is obviously not harnessed to a war effort.

Data for analysis is drawn from *The Asahi Newspaper*. It is interesting to note that the Japanese newspapers written in English were still being published during the war, including *The Japan Times and Advertiser* which was later called *The Japan Times*. They contained contemporary official English translations of the reports from the Imperial War Headquarters. Sometimes I have used the official English versions of these newspapers. However, given the fact that these official contemporary English versions were not written by native speakers of English, there are some mistakes in the English. Where necessary, I have made changes within square brackets to clarify what was said, e.g. 'Elsalem' [*sic*, Jerusalem], 'the Potsdam Proclamation' [*sic*, the Potsdam Declaration]. Also, in some places, meanings are garbled in the translation from the original Japanese versions. In these places I have used my own translation to keep the original meaning.

This paper focuses on the subject of modality as related to point of view. Modality is interpreted fairly broadly as a speaker's means of expressing an attitude towards the propositional content of the utterance he or she makes, and as a mode that functions to regulate the interpersonal relations in a language community. The organization of this paper is as follows. Firstly, the term 'modality' is defined. Secondly, some general characteristics of Japanese propaganda are introduced in terms of epistemic and deontic modalities and the use of classical language. Thirdly, the relationship between modality and point of view is discussed, using the model by Simpson (1993). In the application part of the paper, this theoretical model will be applied to the analysis of newspaper texts, to demonstrate the distinctive patterns of modality and point of view adopted in wartime texts. Since characterization necessitates comparison, a diachronic comparison is undertaken for data analysis by comparing texts from wartime with those from peacetime (i.e., pre-war and post-war periods). This study then concludes that the war register adopts stronger modality whereas the peacetime register in general adopts weaker modality.

2. Modality: basic concepts

Modality is an important linguistic tool for realizing the interpersonal function and expressing social roles between the addresser and the addressee. It is a broad expression of a speaker's attitude towards the situation or event described by a sentence or about the proposition expressed by the sentence (Halliday 1970, 1976; Halliday and Hasan 1985). Modality can be both epistemic and deontic[1] and most modal expressions can be used in both ways. For example, there are ambiguities or semantic blends in the interpretations of the sentences, 'John must have a bath every day' and 'The president must be John' (See Halliday 1970, 1976 for detailed analysis). In Japanese wartime propaganda, for example, this type of semantic ambiguity is exploited in reports on Japanese defeats, as will be explained in the use of deontic modals in section 7.4.

It is important to note that there are various ways of expressing modality or varying degrees of the addresser's commitment to the proposition: auxiliary adverbs, adjectives, verbs, nouns, verbs. In addition, there are other less known means of conveying full commitment to the validity of a proposition such as *emphatic affirmation*, *generic reference* and *presupposition* (see Simpson 1990 for details). In this study my attention is restricted to auxiliary verbs as the main tool for realizing modality.

My hypothesis concerning modality is that the more critical the war situation became, the more high-value modality (i.e. modality indicating the strong commitment of the addresser) was used in wartime discourse in Japanese newspapers. Modality also expresses the mode within which propositional content is presented as authoritative (Hodge and Kress 1979: 85). Modality also functions as a manifestation of power and 'establishes the degree of authority of an utterance' (ibid.: 122). This function of modality was particularly salient in the cases of Japanese wartime propaganda.

3. Modality and power: Japanese wartime propaganda

3.1 Deontic and epistemic modalities

In wartime Japan, an 'active press' played the role of a war weapon in the ideological war (Shillony 1981). Wartime leaders and journalists used language for persuasion and coercion to make people react as the leaders wanted them to react. The audience was made to perform rather than being informed by the 'active press'. Wartime leaders used the modal aspect of language deontically or to express strong epistemic commitment, e.g. 'We must win', and rarely to represent a weak epistemic commitment 'We may receive an attack'. A deeper analysis of this use of language is given in the application part of this study.

3.2 Classical style and modality

Another important feature of Japanese propaganda is the use of classical, academic styles of language. The style was frequently observed in the wartime register in Japanese newspapers during the Second World War, in particular in the reporting of major war events by the Imperial War Headquarters. The classical style used by the Japanese Imperial Headquarters refers to the old-fashioned written form commonly used in the Heian period (9th-12th centuries). The use of the classical style of language is prevalent in the area of function words such as particles and auxiliary verbs, as well as in content words such as verbs and nouns that were especially coined from ancient texts.

As discussed in section 2, the ways in which full commitment to the proposition of the sentence is expressed are varied. The use of classical language style can also be considered as a technique for realizing modal function which conveys strong epistemic commitment. That is because the classical language style bears the modal effect of certainty, powerfulness, heaviness and authority with its high-flown rhetorical flavour and its decorative style. My basic assumption is that, as Foucault says, 'it was not knowledge that gave the text its signifying function, but the very language of things ... from the seventeenth century onward, the whole domain of the sign is divided between the certain and the probable' (1970: 59). The use of classical language is related to 'certainty' or a strong form of modality, whereas use of a modern style would give a feeling of 'probability' or a weaker form. Unlike the classical language style, modern colloquial style is easy for to common people to access.

George Orwell (1944: 7) said in 'Propaganda and Demotic Speech' that propaganda in general is inclined to adopt a 'bombastic style with a tendency to fall back on archaic words' or 'stilted bookish language which is remote from the popular everyday language'. This may be termed 'centralized, bureaucratic language'. In fact, 'the deader the written language - the farther from the speech - the better' (Anderson 1991: 13) when it comes to institutionalists controlling people and their ideas through language. Elaborated high-sounding terms have the function of disguising the emptiness of proposition, at the same time creating a sense of power or authority. Here, 'elaboration of style outweighs the subject matter and thematic content' (Hervey *et al.* 1995: 70). It is often in the interests of institutionalists that written and formal communications should be as ambiguous as possible to maintain a sense of authority. The features of a wartime register, which may be typical of

authoritarian domains like Japan of the 1940s, can be illustrated by comparing wartime and peacetime registers.

Japanese war reports were issued mainly as announcements by the Imperial War Headquarters, the Army, or the Navy, or by way of special telegraphs from local correspondents. These announcements were published as lead stories on the front pages of newspapers, in the particular style of the classical Japanese language. This was particularly so at critical points.

If modality is an interpersonal feature of language, it can be suggested that classical language was used to manipulate the hierarchical structure of Japanese society. Through the connotations of 'certainty', 'heaviness', or 'bookishness', the point of view implied is one that emanates from above (the emperor and the government) down to the ordinary people as 'commands'. The use of classical language in the Second World War created the impression of 'intellectual snobs who were to "talk down to" the masses' and had a distancing or obfuscating effect that was designed to control people. (Orwell 1944: 20). In contrast to this 'language of hierarchy', peacetime language can be viewed as 'the language of solidarity', with fewer connotations of heaviness and certainty since peacetime language uses a less official, more informal and casual style[2]. The difference of attitude in interpersonal relationships between wartime and peacetime derives from a difference in point of view.

4. Modality and point of view

4.1 'Point of view' as an indicator of authorial bias

In the simplest sense, point of view indicates a speaker's or writer's special way of conceptualizing a world-view or ideology. Fowler says 'language does not allow us to say something without conveying an attitude to that something' (Fowler 1977: 76). No text or fiction is considered to be objective, neutral, or value-free. It is basically the writer's point of view, 'angle of vision', 'angle of telling', world-view, or authorial interest that determines the essence of a story's style and that provides the story with its particular 'feel and 'colour' (Simpson 1993: 5). Genette (1983) observes:

> The story is presented in the text through the mediation of some 'prism', 'perspective', 'angle of vision', verbalized by the narrator though not necessarily his ...

The studies of point of view were originally developed as a tool for analysing narratives (cf. Uspensky 1973). The theoretical model of point of view, nevertheless, may have wide applications in the areas of political and institutional discourse. In this study I use the model in the analysis of printed media discourse.

4.2 Internal and external points of view

In relation to the analysis of point of view, two basic concepts are of particular importance: internal and external points of view. Internal focalization suggests that the story is regulated and mediated by the first-person narrator's view, and often represents a subjective, fixed point of view as the source of the narration is the centre of consciousness of a narrator or a certain character. This viewing stance is characterized by the use of first-person pronouns (*I, we*) and *verba sentiendi* (words expressing feelings, thoughts, and perceptions, e.g., *feel, suffer, think*). External focalization represents an objective, neutral, and panchronic stance outside the consciousness of participants involved in the story, from which the events and characters are described (Simpson 1993: 39). The next section clarifies the relationship between point of view and modal expressions.

4.3. The model of modality and point of view by Simpson

Modality and point of view have an inseparable relationship. Simpson systematized the relationship between these two topics by developing Fowler's original model of 'point of view'. According to Simpson (1993: 46), 'much of the "feel" of a text is attributable to the type of point of view or authorial interests it exhibits'. With regard to the relationship between authorial attitude and modality, Coates (1983: 32) says a statement that expresses strong obligation is subjective whereas a statement that expresses weak obligation is objective as far as the speaker's involvement is concerned.

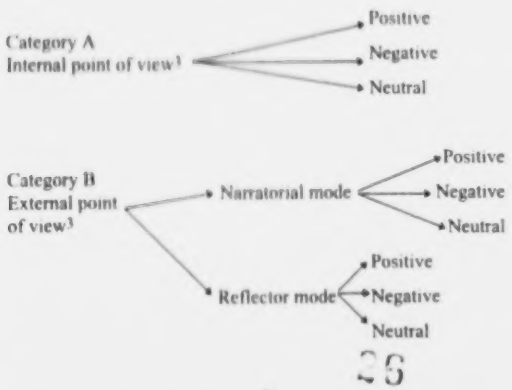
Figure 1 schematizes the relationships between modal systems and the non-linguistic concepts that each of the modal systems realises.

Modal system	Non-linguistic concepts represented
DEONTIC ---------->	obligation, duty, and commitment
BOULOMAIC ---------->	desire
EPISTEMIC ---------->	knowledge, belief, and cognition
PERCEPTION ---------->	perception

Figure 1. The relationship between the modal system and non-linguistic concepts (Simpson 1993: 51)

The definitions of 'boulomaic modality' and 'perception modality' in the above figure are as follows. Boulomaic modality, as a supplement to deontic modality, expresses the desire or wishes of the speaker, as in 'I hope...', 'I wish...', 'I regret..'. Perception modality is a subcategory of epistemic modality, and expresses the degree of commitment to the validity of a proposition, based on some reference to human perception (Perkins 1983: 81 cited in Simpson 1993: 50). Examples of perception modality are: 'It is obvious that his critique is right', 'Apparently his critique is right'.

The following is a slightly simplified and revised model of point of view realized by modality, as developed by Simpson.



Positive shading:
deontic, boulomaic systems foregrounded; *verba sentiendi* present

Negative shading:
epistemic and perception systems foregrounded; supplemented
with generalized 'words of estrangement' (words expressing uncertainty and alienation,
e.g. *maybe, perhaps*, etc.)

Neutral shading:
unmodalized categorical assertions dominant; few *verba sentiendi* and evaluative adjectives and adverbs

Figure 2. A model of point of view (Simpson 1993: 56, 75)

Category A stories represent stories written with an internal point of view and Category B stories indicate stories written with an external point of view. Category A stories are subdivided further on the basis of three patterns of modality: positive, negative, and neutral shadings. It may be important to reiterate that I am taking a model that has been used to analyse fictional stories and adapting it for the analysis of printed media discourse. The terms 'positive, negative and neutral shading' are taken from Simpson (1993) and the explanation of each category is as follows. The term 'shading' is used as equivalent to 'mode' (i.e. a particular style), and is adopted simply to differentiate lexically from 'mode' as in 'Narratorial or Reflector mode'.

Category A: Positive shading

Category A positive stories are characterized by the rich use of evaluative adjectives and adverbs (e.g., *happily, vain, terrible*), *verba sentiendi* (defined above) and the deontic and boulomaic modalities of obligation, desire, duties, and opinions (*you must..., I want ...*). By contrast, the use of the epistemic and perception systems is rare (*possibly, maybe, perhaps, evidently, might have been*). To put it simply, the use of 'words of estrangement' or the more 'alienating' forms of epistemic and perception modality is suppressed, and 'the resulting narrative is more co-operatively oriented towards the reader through its clear realization of obligation, duties and desires' (Simpson, op. cit.: 56-58).

Category A: Negative shading

Category A stories with negative shading are characterized by the use of epistemic and perception modalities that are not found in Category A stories with positive shading. This type of point of view exhibits the following linguistic features: epistemic modal auxiliaries, modal adverbs, and modal lexical verbs such as *I wonder, I think, I assume, I suppose*, perception adverbs such as *evidently, perhaps, apparently* ; human perception verbs such as *it looked like (as if), it seemed, it appears*. Since this type of point of view is basically internal, 'the bewilderment and estrangement devices from within a participating character's consciousness' signify his/her uncertainty about events or characters in the story (ibid.: 58).

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Category A: Neutral shading

A third Category A story is the neutral-shading one. The criteria for the recognition of such a story is the absence of narratorial modality, which means that the narrator/reporter suppresses subjective evaluation, opinions or judgements on events or characters in the story, and tells the story only through 'categorical assertions' (i.e., 'something is or is not') (Lyons 1977: 763, 809). Categorical assertions are 'epistemically non-modal' assertions or propositions (Simpson 1993: 49), and express the strongest degree of speaker's commitment to the factuality of the proposition (Lyons, op. cit.: 808-809). For example, 'it is raining' is epistemically stronger than modalized 'it must be raining' (ibid.: 808). So the style of neutral shading in Category A exhibits the 'flat, unreflective, cool, distanced and detached' narration of the first person pronouns (Simpson, op. cit.: 62, 75). There are few uses of *verba sentiendi* and evaluative adverbs and adjectives. This type of text displays 'extended sequences of straightforward physical description with little attempt at psychological development' (ibid.: 62, 65).

Category B stories

Category B stories are a little more complicated than Category A stories. Firstly, Category B stories are subdivided into two modes: narratorial and reflector. The former implies a viewing position 'outside the consciousness of any of the characters' while the latter indicates a position that is 'mediated through the consciousness of a particular character' (ibid.: 62). The term 'reflector' was taken up by Simpson (op.cit.: 55) to identify a character whose psychological perspective is expressed in a text. The two Category B modes occur in three subcategories: positive, negative and neutral, producing a total of six types of Category B stories.

Category B: Narratorial mode, positive shading

This type has a lot in common with its Category A counterpart: it has evaluative adjectives and adverbs and a foregrounded deontic and boulomaic modality. The difference from its Category A counterpart lies in 'externality'; the narration is in a third-person voice that adopts a position outside the consciousness of any of the characters.

Category B: Narratorial mode, negative shading

This type of narration is recognized by 'words of estrangement' and the absence of detailed description of the thought of characters. It has a lot in common with Category A negative stories in that epistemic and perception modal systems are given prominence and a sense of 'alienation' is conveyed. In addition, there are words of estrangement to distance the reader with an external perspective or a modalizer for negative shading. Maynard (1993) calls them 'quotative explanation markers'. These markers include, for example, 'it may be that...', 'it will be that...', 'it is said that...', 'it appears that...', 'it is supposed to be that...', 'to say...'. These 'quotative explanation' markers express varying degrees of uncertainty or commitment on the writer's part regarding the proposition to be made. For example, by saying in Japanese *to iwarete iru* (it is said ...), it is understood that the speaker 'represents a view accepted by others, [and] shows little commitment of the speaking self'; 'a certain level of objectification' of the propositional content is thus realised (ibid.: 251). So these 'quotative explanations' pragmatically and interactionally function as devices to 'accommodate to others and to show sensitivity' to the certainty of the proposition and the reader's or hearer's feelings. Maynard says that these quotative explanations, including *'to iu'* ('to say',) or weaker modalizers, suggest the existence of a detached point of view or plural voices, where a multitude of voices proliferates. Maynard notes, especially in relation to Japanese

> the availability of the quotative explanation offers an environment conducive to mixing different voices intrasententially. ... the Japanese language producer and consumer alike are likely to have easy access to the fluidity of viewpoints as expressed by different voices within a single utterance
>
> (Maynard 1993: 252).

Category B: Narratorial mode, neutral shading

This narratorial mode is the most impersonal, as a narrator uses little or no modalized language; there are few *verba sentiendi* or evaluative adjectives and adverbs. It lacks direct description and analysis of the thought and feelings of characters. This corresponds to Rimmon-Kennan's 'objective' (neutral, uninvolved) focalization as opposed to 'subjective' (coloured, involved) focalization (Rimmon-Kennan 1983: 80). This narratorial mode is supposed to be the ideal journalistic style 'in terms of its factuality and objective approach' to the events and characters that journalists are trying to describe (Simpson 1993: 68).

Category B: Reflector mode

As this type of narration is not directly related to this study, unlike Category A stories and Category B stories in the narratorial mode, only a brief explanation is given here. Each of the three subcategories of Category B reflector mode has much in common with its counterpart in the Category B narratorial mode and Category A stories when it comes to the use of modal expressions. The main difference is clearly that, in Category B reflector mode, the story is 'mediated in the third person through the consciousness of a Reflector' (Simpson, op. cit.: 69; see the reference for more details).

The theoretical model and tools presented so far (modality in relation to the use of classical language style and point of view) will be applied to systematizing the difference between wartime and peacetime international conflict discourses in Japanese newspapers in section 6.2.

5. Method of analysis of diachronic comparison

Characterization necessitates comparison. The existence of a wartime register is confirmed by looking at and comparing the styles of newspapers of three different but proximate periods: pre-war (just before the war), wartime and post-war (just after the war). Comparison of these three periods is necessary to demonstrate that the emergence of a wartime register is due purely to the demands of a wartime society, to the need to consolidate state power and control people, and not due to simple language change resulting from historical change. The 'pre-war' period refers to the time up until December 1941, when Japan entered all-out war with Britain and America in addition to China.

I will analyse texts from the following periods for the purpose of comparative analysis of register types:

June 1941 to December 1941	8th December 1941 to August 1945	15th August 1945 to 1946
pre-war 'peacetime'	war period	post-war peacetime
'prelude' to war with US & UK --> peacetime register	all-out war with US, UK, China, and USSR -->wartime register	peacetime register

Table 1. Register types in news articles in Japanese newspapers in the 1940s

6. Application: the use of modal structures in Japanese newspaper discourse

The theoretical ideas discussed so far are now applied to Japanese wartime and peacetime discourses in newspaper texts to justify what is shown on Table 1.

6.1 Analysis of modality

My basic findings on the subject of modality are as follows. In wartime propaganda, deontic or strong epistemic modality is frequently used, for example through classical forms, to express an assertive attitude. In peacetime non-critical discourse, by contrast, weaker epistemic modality is standard. (See *interpretation* below.)

6.2 Modality and point of view in Japanese wartime and peacetime discourses

This analysis of modality may be deepened by applying Simpson's (1993) idea of modality and point of view. This helps to clarify the fundamental difference between points of view in wartime and peacetime texts as expressed through the modal systems.

6.2.1 (A) Wartime propaganda in newspapers

Consistently Category A internal perspective and positive shading of commitment is expressed through the following features:

(a) a foregrounded deontic and boulomaic modality (e.g. 'We shall never surrender');

(b) modality of strong epistemic commitment realized by the use of classical auxiliary verbs or particles (e.g., -seri, -tari) and the absence of the more 'alienating' form of epistemic and perception modality;

(c) subjective namings: we versus them or the enemy as pronouns and other namings for interpersonal markers (first-person narration);

(d) evaluative adverbs and adjectives (e.g., triumphantly, valiantly, our powerful troops);

(e) The Japanese side almost always takes the role of Actor /Agent while the enemy is Patient, so that the whole discourse has a positive connotation. (The transitivity pattern in wartime propaganda has been explained in the Introduction; see Section 1 for description of Agent and Patient).

6.2.2 (B) Peacetime rhetoric in international conflict/competition discourses in news articles in newspapers

The Category B external perspective with a neutral or negative shading of narratorial mode of non-commitment (although it shifts to 'internal point of view' in an extremely 'nationalistic' context) is expressed by means of the following features:

(a) use of weaker epistemic and perception systems, and categorical assertions supplemented by 'words of estrangement', which produce a cool and distanced tone (e.g., it seems..., it may be...);

(b) use of objective reference (e.g., nation's names such as 'Japan' or 'the US') instead of subjective references such as we or them (i.e., the third-person narration);

(c) less use of evaluative adverbs and adjectives;

(d) The Japanese can take the role of Patient while their opponent can be Agent in a passive situation for the Japanese; roles are assigned explicitly.

These findings accord well with Coates's observation that a statement that expresses strong obligation is subjective (i.e., the internal point of view; the whole nation shares the same ideology and goal in wartime) whereas a statement that expresses weak obligation is objective (i.e., the external point of view) as far as the addresser's involvement is concerned (see section 4.3 above). The former may be the case for wartime propaganda while the latter may be the case for peacetime non-critical discourse.

The difference in types of modality between wartime and peacetime discourses is due to the difference in the functions of language between these periods. In wartime, the function of language is instrumental and directive, which means the writers of the texts (propagandists) intend to influence the public through the words expressed. By contrast, in peacetime (apart from times of serious national crisis), the function of language is simply referential and informative; the principal purpose of news articles in newspapers in this period is to report what has happened without obfuscation.

6.3 On Japanese modal expressions

The appendix lists the main auxiliary verbs, particles, and verbs in both modern and classical Japanese that appear in my data for the analysis of modality. Their modal meanings and tense and aspectual meanings are listed. The topics of tense and aspect are a subject for a separate study. In the appendix, nevertheless, all the meanings, including modal, tense, and aspect, are listed because the use of particles and auxiliary verbs (suffixes) used in classical Japanese itself can be important modally as a means of exerting control regardless of meanings[4]. Also, some auxiliary verbs have both modal and tense and aspectual meanings. For example, *tari* (classical particle) is used both for expressing 'completion' (aspectual meaning) and 'assertion' (modal meaning). Note that in Japanese, auxiliary verbs come at the end of a sentence attached to a verb, unlike English, since Japanese has a basic SOV sentence structure. For example,

(1) *Wareware wa* *kata-neba naranai*
We TOPIC win MUST
'We must win' (Modality expressing obligation)

See the appendix for further comments on grammar.

7. Exemplification

I now look at the illustrative data from newspapers that provided the grounds for these findings. As noted earlier, three periods were examined. Firstly, let us consider the data from the so-called pre-war period before Japan entered an all-out war.

7.1. Texts from the pre-war period: before Japan is engaged in all-out war

The modal expressions and points of view adopted for war reports on Britain, Germany, America, and the Soviet Union from the pre-war period are now examined. Examination of these texts reveals that features of the wartime register were not used in the pre-war period; negative shading of narratorial mode based on an external point of view can be found. First, whereas auxiliary verbs and particles of classical style were used in war reporting texts (discussed below) in order to create an effect of strong modality, the same features but in modern language were used to describe situations

other than Japan's direct involvement in war. It appears that the greater the involvement, the less ordinary the language in reports. Examples 2 and 3 report on fighting involving the UK, Germany, and Russia in the Middle East and Russia. The underlined parts indicate the type of point of view adopted: particles, objective/subjective naming and transitivity markers.

Ex. 2

EIGUN CHIRUSU[5]SENRYOO
BRITISH ARMY CAPTURED TYRE

Eigun, De-Gaulle rengoogun no Syria sakusen wa chakuchaku shinkoochuu de genzai made mo senkyoo tsugi no toori.

The operation in Syria by the Allied Forces of the British army and De Gaulle is making steady progress, and producing the following war gains:

(1) *Syria, Trans Jordan kokkyoo o toppa shita rengoogun wa kokkyoo fukin ni yoosho Teramo o senryoo-shita.*

(2) *Mata hoka no ittai wa Damascus toonan 40 mairu no Murzug o kooryaku-shita.*

(*The Asahi Newspaper* 10 June 1941)

(1) The Allied troops of the British Army and De Gaulle passed beyond the border between Syria and Transjordan, and captured Teramo, an important strategic city around the border.

(2) Another army troop [*sic*, i.e., unit] captured Merajayoun, 40 miles southeast of Damascus.

(Translation from *The Japan Times and Advertiser* of the same day)

Ex. 3

DOKUGUN 10 KIRO NI SEMARU
THE GERMAN ARMY REACHES A POINT 10 KILOMETERS FROM MOSCOW

(1) *Toobu sensen ni okeru dokugun sakusen wa seikoori ni shinpo- shiteiru.*

(2) *Dokugun wa Leningrad hooi o keizoku, Leningrad shi wa sudeni dokugun hooka no motoni obiyaka sarete-iru.*

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 6 September1941)

(1) German operations on the Eastern Front are making successful progress.

(2) German forces continue to encircle Leningrad, and the city is being menaced by German artillery fire.

(Translation from *The Japan Times and Advertiser* of the same day)

The point of view adopted in these discourses is external with negative shading. There is no use of classical particles, such as *nari, tari* or *shiseri*, to give a strong sense of commitment. The use of proper nouns (*German forces, British army, Moscow*) also supports the idea of the presence of the external point of view.

There is another news story from the 'pre-war' period that reports President Roosevelt's ordering of the freezing of Japanese assets in the US in July 1941, when the relationship between the US and Japan deteriorated just before the war. The point of view assumed here is also external with negative shading.

Ex. 4

EIBEI NIHON SHISAN O [accusative marker, ACC, hereafter] *TOOKETSU*

Roosevelt Daitooryoo wa, daitooryoo ree ni yori 25 nichi yoru zaibei nihonshisan no tooketsu o meeji-ta. Migi kooree wa 26 nichi kara kooryoku o hassuru, migi ni taishi howaito hausu kara tsugi no gotoki setsumee ga hasse-rareta....

BRITAIN AND US FREEZE JAPANESE ASSETS [ACC]

President Roosevelt issued an executive order freezing Japanese assets in America on the evening of 25th July. This act will take effect on 26th July .... The following explanation was given from the White House...

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 27 July 1941; my translation)

The point of view adopted here is also external with negative shading for the same reasons as in the previous examples (Exs. 2-3): (1) the use of proper nouns ('Japan', 'US') instead of 'we' and 'enemy', (2) the modern particles (*ta, rareta*) which have weaker modal functions are used instead of classical ones; classical auxiliary verbs are not used for reports on countries not yet directly at war with Japan. This means that somewhat weaker epistemic modalities are used toward countries not directly fighting with Japan. (3) Japan's side is *Patient* here, as exemplified by the use of the accusative particle, *o*, as in '*Nihon no shisan o*' (Japanese assets (ACC)). Hence here the words are used to describe occurrences or changes in the world and words, rather than to make changes to the world.

Since Japan was not directly at war with Britain, America, or the Soviet Union during this period, reports describing war activities of these countries sometimes employed weaker modality, as manifested in the use of *-de aroo, -daroo* (it may be that...), *-to nareba* (it will be that...), *-to tsutaete iru* (it is said that...), *-to mitarete iru, -to omowarete iru, ... mieru de aru* (it seems that..., it appears that...), ... *hazu de aru* (it is supposed to be...), i.e., 'modal words of estrangement' to distance the reader, with the use of an external perspective (Fowler, 1977: 93-95; Weber, 1989: 97; Simpson, 1993: 42). As explained in section 4.3, these so-called 'quotative explanation' markers express varying degrees of uncertainty or commitment on the writer's part as to the proposition to be made. Hence, 'a certain level of objectification' of the propositional content is realised (Maynard 1993: 251). The following are texts that contain examples of these quotative explanations, weaker modals, or 'words of estrangement' from peacetime discourse.

Ex. 5

WAGA TAI EE SAKU CHUUSHI

EE TAISHI CHIKAKU GAISOO HOOMON

Konoe shin naikaku ni yotte tenkai sareru Nihon no gaikoo hooshin wa zen naikaku irai hakuritsu sareta konponsaku ni kichoo o oki, Nihon no Eebei ni taisuru taido wa henka o minai de aroo to Eeikoku wa mite iru ga.... Shikashi Ee seefu to shitewa izen to shite Nihon no dookoo ni gishin anki

no katachi de, Nihon no shin i ha'aku ni tsutomete ori, Kluge taishi wa kono Ee seefu no i o ukete, saikin no kikai ni Toyoda gaisoo to kaiken o okonai Eekoku gawa no kyokutoo joosee ni taisuru kenkai o tsutae, katsu Nihon no tai ee saku dashin o okonau koto ni naroo ...

[BRITAIN] EYES OUR POLICY TOWARDS BRITAIN

BRITISH AMBASSADOR TO VISIT [JAPANESE] FOREIGN MINISTER IN NEAR FUTURE

Japan's new foreign policy under the new Konoe Cabinet, follows the established policy of earlier cabinets. Britain sees that there will be no change in Japan's attitude towards Britain and USA... But the British government is still suspicious of Japan's move, and is trying hard to probe Japan's intention. Ambassador Kluge, responding to such a request from the British government, will have a talk with Foreign Minister Toyoda, and will report British views on Far East policy and probe Japan's British policy....

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 22 July 1941; my translation)

This is an example of an external point of view with negative shading. In addition to weaker modals such as *aroo, naroo* (it may be that...; it will be that...), objective naming such as *Ee, Eekoku* (Britain), and *Nihon* (Japan), instead of saying 'us' and 'them', are used, with one exception in the headline. The following are examples of similar patterns of point of view (external, negative-mode).

Ex. 6

FUTSU EI KAISEN HISSHI NO KEESEE
EIGUN SYRIA KOKKYOO E SHUUKETSU

FIGHTING BETWEEN FRANCE AND BRITAIN IMMINENT[6]
(AS) BRITISH TROOPS MASSED AT SYRIAN BORDER

Haifa (Palestine) yori Beirut ni tasshita joohoo ni yoreba, eigun wa mokka ... Transjordan fukin no Jordan gawa keekoku ni idoo shuuketsu shitsutsu aru moyoo de aru. Nao, De Gaulle shoogun oyobi Catoru shoogun mo chikaku Jerusalem no eikokugun, shireibu ni toochaku no hazu de aru to twareru. ... Doitsu wa ... Eigun ga koreijoo Syria shin'nyuu no kisee o misereba, tokui no dengekisen o kankoo subeki to seesan o yuushite orumono to omowareru. Toruko no taido wa mottomo chuumoku sare, ... Syria ni sensen kaishi no bawai wa Girisha no sai to onajiku chuuritsu o genshu surumono to miraryeiru.

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 6 June 1941)

British soldiers are presumably gathering in ... the valley district of Transjordan, according to a report from Haifa (Palestine) reaching Beirut. Also, it is said that General de Gaulle and General Catre are soon to join the British headquarters at Elusalem [*sic*, Jerusalem].... Germany ... is believed to be well prepared to make a lightning movement in the event of the British showing signs of invading Syria. The attitude of Turkey is now keenly watched, ... and in case fighting starts in Syria, Turkey is expected to remain neutral, as in the case of Greek operations [*sic*, *original*: operations in Greece].

(Translation from *The Japan Times and Advertiser* of the same day)

These data include 'modal words of estrangement' that are typical of negative-shading (underlined). The use of these 'modal words of estrangement' means that the propositional content of a report is not guaranteed. These texts report on a conflict in which Japan was not directly involved; these are

events that took place outside the sphere of Japan's commitment. In war discourse about conflicts in which Japan is involved, there are very few examples of such 'words of estrangement' even when the propositional content of a report is uncertain, just as in the peacetime discourse in the above examples. By contrast, during wartime, from a simple physical point of view, the information network is easier to cut off or simply restrict, because of material scarcity. Therefore, the relative reliability of information becomes shakier than in peacetime. Despite all this, ironically, the frequency of stronger modality increases in wartime. This may be because during war, as examples below show, dramatic, strong assertion is needed to mobilize the people of the nation. Concern for the certainty or credibility of the news is subordinated to the emergent demands of war discourse. This is possibly because less direct forms are less persuasive. Weaker modal verbs imply that there may be other possibilities that the nation can take, and hence objectivity comes in, and thus the compelling force becomes weaker. Objectivity is a challenge to a government attempting to mobilize or unify a nation. Only an external point of view can admit the existence of diversity and alternatives. By contrast, 'certainty' is a product of narrow-mindedness or a positive, internal point of view.

7.2 Texts from wartime newspapers when Japan is at all-out war with the UK, the USA, and China

Once Japan starts war with the U.S. and Britain, the use of such weaker modalizers or low-value modals dramatically decreases in reports of battles with the US and UK; instead, strong modalizers or high-value modals, including the use of classical auxiliary verbs, increase in reports of major events. The use of modals such as these implies that in war discourse, there is no shift or 'fluidity' of viewpoints as expressed by different voices. If Maynard's observation (that Japanese language has easy access to a fluidity of viewpoints) is correct, the phenomenon of the lack of weaker modalizers in war discourse suggests how this style 'deviates' from the 'normal' usage of the Japanese language.

The hypothesis can be formed that 'the language of hierarchy' with strong modalizers is a product of war discourse, whereas 'the language of solidarity' with weaker modalizers is a characteristic of peacetime discourse. The following are typical examples of texts issued by the Imperial War Headquarters, written with an internal point of view with positive shading. They contain classical auxiliary verbs (underlined and marked by [CL]), which create an image of strong assertion or certainty, and hence a strong epistemic commitment to the proposition of the war reports. They use first-person narration as typicalized by the use of *waga, ware* (*we*) and *teki* (enemy).

Ex. 7

BEI TAIHEEYOO KANTAI WA ZENMETSU-SERI [CL]

...Teki riku kaigun kookuu heeryoku ni atae-taru [CL] *songai*
Zenkuu bakugeki ni yori enjoo-seshimetaru [CL] *mono yaku 450 ki, gekichin-serumono 14 ki, kono hoka gekiha-serumono* [CL] *tasuu, kakumune 16 too o enjoo-seshime* [CL] *2 too o hakaisu* [CL]

US PACIFIC FLEET IS WIPED OUT

Damages inflicted over [*sic*, i.e. on] the enemy's army and naval air forces:
approximately 450 planes were set on fire either by bombing or machine-gunning, and 14 shot down; besides the foregoing, many planes were destroyed; sixteen hangars were set afire and two destroyed.

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 19 December 1941;
translation from *The Japan Times and Advertiser* of the same day)

Ex. 8

PHILLIPINE TOO SHUTO MANILA KANZEN NI SENRYO

BEI NO TOOA KYOTEN KAIMETSU SU [CL]

Teekoku rikugun Hitoo senryaku butai wa 2ka gogo shuto Manila o kanzen ni senryoo shi, sarani Corregidor too yoosai oyobi Bataan hantoo no yooai ni yoru teki ni taishi kougeki o shinkouchuu-nari [CL]. *Teekoku rikugun butai wa saku futsuka gogo irai zokuzoku Manila shinai ni tooryuu shitsutsu-ari* [CL].

MANILA, THE CAPITAL OF THE PHILIPPINES, FULLY OCCUPIED.

AMERICAN BASE IN EAST ASIA DESTROYED

The Imperial Army forces operating in the Philippines completely occupied Manila, the capital of the islands, on the afternoon of 2 January, and they are now keeping up their onslaught upon the enemy in Corregidor and Bataan, the enemy's strongholds near Manila. Imperial Army units have been entering the city of Manila one after another since the afternoon of 2 January.

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 4 January 1942; my translation)

Ex. 9

DAIEE TEEKOKU NO IKKAKU KUZURU

HONG KONG NO EEGUN KOOFUKU-SU [CL]

A CORNER OF THE BRITISH EMPIRE CRUMBLES

BRITISH ARMY IN HONG KONG SURRENDERS

Hong Kong too no ikkaku ni yotan o tamochitsutsu-arishi [CL] *teki wa waga chuuya o watazaru* [CL] *mookoogeki ni yori hon 25nichi 17ji 50pun tsuini koofuku o mooshi idetaru* [CL] *o motte gun wa 19ji 30pun teesen o meeji-tari* [CL].

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 26 December 1941)

The enemy, who had been offering vain resistance [*original Japanese text*: to our unremitting attack] after being cornered in one section of Hong Kong Island, finally proposed surrender [*original*: to our troops] at 5:50 p.m., Thursday, being unable to further withstand the furious onset of our army forces. As a result, an order to cease firing was issued to our fighting forces at 7:30 p.m.

(translation from *The Japan Times and Advertiser*, 26 December 1941;
translation of headline is mine)

Ex. 10

GILBERT NI SENKA KAKUDAI
TARAWA TOO NI GEKISEN TSUZUKU

FURTHER MILITARY ACHIEVEMENTS MADE ON GILBERT ISLANDS
FIERCE BATTLES CONTINUE ON TARAWA ISLAND

(1) Teekoku sensuikan wa 25nichi mimee Makin too seehoo kaimen ni oite, teki kookuubokan issoki o koogeki shi kore o taiha seshime-tari [CL].

(2) Teekoku kaigun kookuu butai wa 26nichi yuukoku Gilbert shotoo seehoo kaimen ni oite tekki-kidoo butai o koogeki shi kookuu bokan ni seki o gekichin-seri [CL].
Waga hoo no songai: mikanki ikki nari. [CL].

(3) Teekoku kaigun kookuu butai wa 27 nichi yuukoku Gilbert shotoo seehoo kaimen ni oite sarani raishuu shi koreru tekkidoo butai o koogekishi hidari no senka o e-tari [CL]....

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 30 November 1943)

(1) An Imperial submarine at dawn on November 25 attacked an enemy aircraft carrier in the sea area west of Makin Island and heavily damaged it.

(2) Imperial Naval Air Units attacked an enemy mobile force in the sea area west of the Gilbert Islands on the evening of November 26 and sank two aircraft carriers (one of them instantaneously).
Loss on our side: one plane that has not yet returned.

(3) Imperial Naval Air Units also attacked another enemy mobile force that came attacking in the sea area west of the Gilbert Islands on the evening of November 27 and achieved the following war results....

(Translation from *The Japan Times*, 30 November 1943)

In this way, the propositions containing classical auxiliary verbs such as *nari, tari, seri* (copular, assertion, or completive markers), *ari* (copular), *zaru/zari* (negation), *seshime* (causative) with the Japanese side as Actor/Agent, suggest epistemically stronger commitment based on positive shading; thus they add a powerful, positive connotation to the discourse. There are no classical auxiliary verbs in war propaganda used to denote weaker modality or 'words of estrangement': presumption/hearsay (*nari* ; another meaning of *nari*) or conjecture or probability concerning an action or state in the present as well as in the future (*mu, ramu*), or supposition (*meri, rashi, mashi*). So it can be stated that the point of view implied in the above data is an internal point of view of positive mode. Of course, the uses of *waga, ware* (we), and *teki* (enemy) indicate the presence of the internal point of view.

7.3 Use of deontic modals to prescribe future events

Some examples are now given of deontic modality, by which the speaker or the writer decides which future events are necessary, possible, or desirable. Deontic modality is important in war propaganda in order to regulate the behaviour of the populace. It is commonly used in wartime propaganda to

prescribe future events while in peacetime discourse epistemic modality (e.g., 'It will be...', 'It may be...', 'It is expected that...') is used. The following are reports written with an internal point of view with positive shading using deontic modality. When the battle of Okinawa was close to total defeat, the following report appeared in the newspaper:

Ex. 11

Okinawa hontoo ni koogun to tomoni teki taigun o gekigeki, kesshi kantoo o tsuzukeru dooken juumin tachi no arukoto o warewarę wa wasuretewa naranai

We should not forget the Okinawan people, who have been continuing to fight bloody battles in cooperation with the Imperial Army against a big enemy army.

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 14 June 1945; my translation)

In fact, this report was made when the situation in Okinawa was extremely bad. Only nine days after this report, on 23 June 1945 Okinawa was conquered by the Americans. The use of the deontic modal verb, *We should not..* is a typical example from Simpson (1993)'s 'internal, positive perspective.' The use of the first-person pronoun 'we' also confirms the presence of this perspective. Other examples of deontic use of language are:

Ex. 12

KONO TATAKAI KANARAZU KATSU
ICHIOKU NI KAKU SENTOO NO KIRYOKU [MOTOMARERU]

WE SHALL DEFINITELY WIN THIS WAR
EACH ONE OF A HUNDRED MILLION PEOPLE SHOULD HAVE FIGHTING SPIRIT

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 9 April 1945; my translation)

Ex. 13

MAZU BAN'NIN NO MINI NARE
MOTTO HOSHII ATATAKAI SHINSETSUSHIN

PUT YOURSELF IN THE PLACE OF TEN THOUSAND PEOPLE
MORE CARING HEART IS NEEDED

(*The Asahi Newspaper* 6 May 1945; my translation)

Even a big defeat was reported with deontic modality, which expresses a strong obligation to the people of Japan, rather than with weak epistemic modality. In relation to point of view, these findings accord well with Coates's observation that a statement that expresses strong obligation is subjective (i.e., the internal point of view with positive shading), whereas a statement that expresses weak obligation is objective (i.e., the external point of view with negative shading) as far as the speaker's involvement is concerned (previously mentioned in section 4.3). The former may be the

case of texts of wartime propaganda from which these examples are drawn, while the latter may be the case of peacetime non-critical discourse texts.

There is an interesting example of deontic modality in the data that reports the final defeat of Okinawa. The ambiguity or neutrality of modal expressions discussed in section *2.2* is exploited here.

Ex. 14

[Waga shubi butai wa] teki no waga shujinchinai shintoo o yurusuno yamunaki ni itareri

We had to allow the enemy to penetrate into our main position.

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 26 June 1945; my translation)

There is a double instance of deontic modality here. 'Allow' presupposes causation and volition on the part of the Subject (i.e., 'we made it possible for the enemy to penetrate into our main position.'). 'Had to' seems to imply a *Patient* role. However, 'had to' (= 'it was necessary, inevitable') is neutral as between a *Patient* or *Agent* Subject (see section one, the Introduction for the transitivity patterns of Japanese wartime propaganda). For example, it is not clear in 'I had to visit my mother' whether the necessity was decided (or created) by me, by my mother, or by circumstances. So the example in this data 'allows' the deontic interpretation of positive shading; 'We decided it was necessary to let the enemy penetrate into our main position' These examples of modality again confirm the presence of the internal, positive perspective in which 'we' are in command of the whole situation.

7.4 Texts from the post-war period

Once the war ends in August 1945 and there is no more war reporting by the Imperial War Headquarters, the use of modality returns to what it used to be in the pre-war period:[7] from high-value modality to low-value modality[8] from stronger modality to weaker modality, from classical style to the modern style that was used before the war (ex. *-seri, -tari, -nari -> -aru, -aroo, -(shi)ta ; -su -> -suru*), and which is quite similar to usage in modern style, even in reporting critical issues on international relations. The point of view adopted here is external with negative shading. Below are examples of texts about issues with the U.S. and Britain after the war. They report on the administrative plans for Japan by the allied nations (the occupation forces) after the war.

Ex. 15

JIYUU SHUGI O JOCHOO SHOOREE

FUTOO NA KANSHOO OKONAWAZU

MA(CARTHUR) GENSUI KANRIHOOSHIN O HAPPYOO

LIBERALISM IS ENCOURAGED
NO UNREASONABLE INTERFERENCE INTO JAPANESE AFFAIRS WILL BE MADE BY THE U.S.
GENERAL MACARTHUR ANNOUNCES THE OCCUPATION PLAN

(1) *MacArthur gensui wa nihon kanri hooshin ni kanshi hidari no seeshiki seemee o happyoo-shita*...

(2) *Ten'noo heeka oyobi Nihon seefu wa MacArthur gensui no shiree o kyooyoo sareru koto naku jisshi surutameno arayuru kikai o teekyoo-sareru....*

(3) *Nihon kokumin ni taishite wa rengoo koku ni taisuru sonkee oyobi shinrai o zoodai suru ga gotoku taiguu-suru.*

(4) *Nihon no gunkoku shigi oyobi gunkokuteki kokka shugi no konzetsu wa sengo no daichi no mokuteki de-aru ga, senryoogun no ichi no mokuteki wa jiyuu shugiteki keekoo o shooree suru kote de-aru....*

(5) *Nihon kokumin wa... shikashi MacArthur gensui no shiree ni motozuki Nihon seefu kara hasse rareru issai no hooritsu, fukoku, meeree ni shitagau hitsuyoo ga- aru.*

(6) *Senryoo gun wa koofukubunsho no jookoo o jisshi suru. Potsdam sengen ni noberareta sho mokuteki ga tassee sareru hi made senryoogun wa Nihon ni todomaru de- aroo.*

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 11 September 1945)

(1) General MacArthur issued an official statement outlining the Allied policy concerning the occupation of Japan as follows....

(2) Every opportunity would be given the Emperor and the Japanese Government to carry out the orders of the Supreme Commander without further compulsion....

(3) [The Allied Forces] will treat the Japanese people (ACC) in a manner aiming at developing their respect for and confidence in the Allied nations.

(4) The abolition of Japanese militarism and military nationalism is the primary objective in the postwar period. The primary aim of the Occupation Forces is encouraging liberal tendencies....

(5) The Japanese must obey all orders, proclamations and laws issued by the Allied Supreme Headquarters to the Japanese government [*sic, original Japanese text says*: The Japanese must obey all orders, proclamations and laws issued by the Japanese government at the command of General MacArthur].

(6) The Occupation Forces will carry out the aims outlined in the statement for surrender. The Occupation Forces will be stationed in Japan until the day when objectives outlined in the Potsdam Proclamation [*sic*, Declaration] are attained.

(Translation from *The Japan Times*, 12 September 1945; translation of headline is mine)

Ex. 16

EIGUN NIHON SHINCHUU KETTEE
SOREN CHUUGOKU RYOOGUN WA FUSANKA

BRITISH COMMONWEALTH SET TO SEND FORCES TO OCCUPY JAPAN;
SOVIET UNION AND CHINA WILL NOT PARTICIPATE

10

(1) ... *Nihon senryoo ni kanshi Beekoku seefu oyobi Eeteekoku o daihyoo suru Gooshuu seefu tono aida ni kyootee ga seeritsu shi Eikoku gun ga Nihon senryoo ni sanka shi, Nihon ni shinchuu suru koto ni kettee-shita* ...

(2) *Kono Ei shinchuugun wa MacArthur gensui o saikoo shireekan to suru Nihon senryoo no ichibu o nasu mono de-aru*

(*The Asahi Newspaper*, 2 February 1946)

(1) ... Regarding the occupation of Japan, the agreement was reached between the US government and the Australian government, acting on behalf of the British Commonwealth Government concerned. It was agreed upon that the British Commonwealth Forces will participate in the occupation of Japan....

(2) The British Commonwealth Occupation Forces will form part of the occupation forces in Japan under the Supreme Command of General Douglas MacArthur, Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers.

(translation from *The Japan Times*, 2 February 1946; translation of headline is mine)

These texts from the post-war period just after Japan's final defeat contain totally different discoursal and modal patterns from wartime propaganda. These texts describe a defeated Japan that is *at the mercy of* the Allied nations after its acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration. The whole discoursal pattern is based on Simpson's 'negative shading', in which weaker epistemic and perception systems are foregrounded, added with words of estrangement (e.g., *de aroo*: it will be that), and so the words seem to reflect the world (Japan's situation). There is use of a deontic modal, as in (5) 'The Japanese must obey...' in example 15. But here, General MacArthur is the person who gave the order, and *the Japanese are simply the Patient who are supposed to take the order*. So, seen from the perspective of the Japanese, the world (Japan's situation) is described from an external point of view with negative shading. This is apparent in several features.

In the first place, no classical auxiliary verbs are used the way they were in wartime reports issued by the Imperial War Headquarters. The use of modern particles instead (*-shita, -suru, -aru, -sareru, de aroo*, underscored) in these texts 15-16 conveys a lower degree of certainty, powerfulness, and authority.

In addition, the point of view adopted by the reporter is understood as more external and objective, as shown by the neutral naming of countries: 'Japan', 'Japanese people', 'British Army', 'China', 'Soviet Union', and 'US Government', instead of the 'we', 'our people', and 'the enemy nations' that were commonly used in wartime propaganda. Also, future events are predicted with a weaker modal, such as '*de aroo*' (it will be that) as in examples 15 and 16. This differs from wartime propaganda, where future events are prescribed with deontic modals such as 'we should ...'. Finally, as explained in the Introduction, Japan's side is described with passives in which Japan is the *Patient*, such as '*Nihon seefu wa ... sareru*' (the Japanese government will not be forced ... and be provided with ...) and the dative-marker (traditionally called Indirect Object) *ni* is attached to Japan, as in '*Nihon kokumin ni taishite*' (towards the Japanese people; see (3) of example 15). Through such linguistic expressions, the whole discourse is based on the negative shading of the external point of view, where words are used to describe occurrences in the world (Japan's situation), which is just the opposite of war propaganda, where words are used to make changes to the world.

8. Conclusions

The findings described in this paper lead to the following conclusions.

(1) Strong modality is employed toward a country directly at war with Japan , with abundant use of classical stylistic features (examples 7 - 14).

	peacetime	wartime
modality used in general	weaker epistemic modality, negative-mode use of modern style	deontic or strong epistemic modality, positive-mode much use of classical style
prediction of future events	**epistemic** *-de aroo, daroo* (it may be that.., it will be that...) *-to naroo* (it will be that...) *-to mirarete iru* *-to naru moyoo de aru* (it is expected that...)	**deontic** *- de arubeki, - subeki,* *- o nasubeki,* *- neba naranai* (we should..., it should be...) *We should win* *We should not forget about soldiers who are fighting hard*
reports of past events	**weaker epistemic** *- ta* *- aru, - suru*	**strong epistemic** *- seri, -seru* [CL] *- tari, -nari, -su* [CL]

Table 2. Differences in modality between wartime and peacetime

(2) In terms of Simpson's theory on the relationship between modality and point of view as applied to Japanese war discourse, the point-of-view from which it was written was an internal and positive one (in the sense that the world should change to fit the words expressed), as shown by the type of modality employed. In Japanese war discourse, as opposed to peacetime discourse, modalities of deontic and strong epistemic commitment are foregrounded.

Table 2 summarizes these observations. It shows that modality, a realizer of the interpersonal function of language, and point of view are closely interrelated.

Notes

1. Epistemic modality indicates the means by which speakers/writers express judgement on the truth of the propositions they utter/write. Deontic modality is concerned with the criterion by which speakers/writers decide which future events are necessary, possible, desirable, etc.

2. Higa (1972) shows how postwar democratization in Japan transformed the function of language from 'a means of exhibiting authority and an instrument of social control into a means of communication even with the masses' (50).

3. Simpson (1993) uses the terms 'homodiegetic' and 'heterodiegetic' instead, with slightly different meanings from 'internal' and 'external' point of view respectively.

4. Maynard (1993), in chapters called 'Style As Discourse Modality *Da* and *Desu/Masu* verb forms' and 'Interactional Particles: *Yo* and *Ne*', discusses how stylistic differences in verb-ending forms (plain versus polite style) and in sentence-final particles (those expressing mutual agreement versus assertive attitude) respectively, contribute to aspects of Discourse Modality and Modal Contextualization (her own phrases).

5. This is a place 70 kilometers southwest of Beirut in Syria (now Lebanon), on the Mediterranean coast.

6. At this time Britain and France were hostile towards each other following the landing of the British troops in Syria (Lebanon) in June 1941, which was France's mandate.

7. In nonwar reporting during the war period such as city news, the newspaper did not use the same type of modality as it used in the war reporting texts. No classical forms were used in nonwar reports. This supports my observations.

8. The terms are taken from Carter and Simpson (1989: 287).

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APPENDIX

Auxiliary verbs, particles and verbs used in the analysis of Japanese modal expressions

Modern Japanese

- (*de*) *aru*	copulative
- (*te*) *iru*	present progressive, continuative perfect
- (*te*) *aru*	continuative perfect
- *suru*	*do*
- *da*	copulative
- *ta*	past, perfect
- *naranai*	*has to*: permission, obligation, prohibition, responsibility
-nai, -nu, -zu	negation
- *seru, -saseru*	causation
- *reru, - rareru*	passive, potential
-to yuu	*to say*
- *no yoo-da, - aroo, -naroo*	*it seems*: inference, conjecture
- *yurusu* (verb)	*allow*: permission

Classical Japanese

- *semu, - sen*	*will, shall*:, intention about future event
- *nu, -zu*	negation
- *ari*	copulative
- *yamunashi, -naranu*	*has to, ought to*: obligation, responsibility, propriety
-*yurusu* (verb)	*allow*: permission
- *seri has done*:	perfect
- *seru*	(abbreviation of *-shiseri*, meaning *have done*)

- *nari*	copulative: may be used in any situation where a copulative expression is called for
- *tari*	(i) copulative: used only to describe a temporary state (Komai and Rohlich 1991: 230)
	(ii) perfect
	(iii) continuative perfect
- *seshimeru* < - *shimu*	causative: *make someone do something*

Note:

In the 'continuative perfect', the verb phrase denotes the remaining result of the completed action rather than the action itself. For example, by saying '*mado ga ai-teiru / ake-tearu*' (the window is open), it means that 'the window opened and as a result it is now open' (Komai and Rohlich 1991: 222-3). See Soga (1983), Hinds (1986), Jorden and Noda (1987) for more on basic Japanese grammar.

CLASSROOM TRANSCRIPTS AND 'NOTICING' IN TEACHER EDUCATION

Tony Lynch (IALS)

Abstract

The focus of this paper is on raising teachers' awareness of what language learners do in and with the target language, rather than on the language that we produce as teachers in managing the classroom process. My interest in the potential of transcripts arises from an on-going study of native/non-native talk in IALS speaking classes. I briefly explain the background to that study, then present two extracts from transcripts of a particular type of group work, and finally suggest ways of using classroom transcripts in pre-service and in-service teacher education.

1. Introduction

For the last two summers (1996 and 1997), IALS has employed a native-speaker course assistant on its pre-sessional English for Academic Purposes course. The suggestion that we should take on an additional native speaker had originally come from students on previous EAP courses, who had seen a need to increase their opportunities to talk English outside class. Those who made the suggestion were clear - indeed, adamant! - that the additional person should not be a teacher. They wanted what they called an 'ordinary', 'normal' native speaker, who would offer conversation practice to supplement the types of interaction already available to them in EAP lessons.

The theoretical literature provides support, from authors such as Swain (1995) and Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos and Linnell (1996), for the argument that, though learner-to-learner interaction provides a useful platform for negotiated input, output and feedback, interaction with a fully competent speaker of the L2 is more likely to 'push' the learners to gain in terms of accuracy and proficiency. On this basis, two native speakers in the classroom are arguably better than one, since they potentially double the opportunities for such beneficial interaction.

Our course assistant (CA) in both years has been a Scottish student on an undergraduate course at Strathclyde University. In summer 1996 her contribution to the course took three forms: (1) she participated in twice-weekly speaking lessons with each class; (2) she talked to the students during the class's weekly review; and (3) she was available as a conversation partner during the students' mid-morning break.

2. The study

My study focuses on the first type of contribution, in speaking classes during the 1996 course, and compares how the students interacted in their classroom with the two native speakers - tutor and CA - as they rehearsed 'scenarios' from academic life (Lynch and Anderson 1992). The classroom procedure involves five stages:

Stage 1 - the class is divided in two and each half is given a role card; they discuss how they are going to approach the problem and rehearse what they might say;

Stage 2 - one player is chosen by each group and they play out the scenario in front of the class;

Stage 3 - after their performance the players return to their group for debriefing;

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Stage 4 - a second pair of players play out a public performance;

Stage 5 - the teacher leads plenary feedback discussion of the two performances.

The data for my study comprise audio-recordings of the group work stages (1 and 3), made in weeks 1-6 of the course, in two EAP classes. During these lesson stages the half-class groups sat at some distance from each other, each with their native-speaker 'consultant' - the tutor in one case and the CA in the other. I taped the resulting interaction on two Tandberg Audio Tutor cassette recorders.

The focus of the study is on possible differences in the interaction involving the CA and the tutor. I expect to find more correction and more metalinguistic talk from the tutors, and more misunderstandings (on either side) and therefore more negotiation of meaning in talk with the CA. As well as making weekly classroom recordings, I asked the students to complete a questionnaire in week 6 in which they could express their perceptions and experiences of communication with their tutors and the CA in class and outside.

3. The transcripts

I have now rough-transcribed all the recordings from the six-week study period and have fine-transcribed two, which I will draw on in this paper. What struck me as I listened to the groups was the sheer complexity of learner talk in this sort of role-play, and the problem of how best to represent it. I have discussed this issue of speech representation elsewhere (Lynch 1996), in discussing how to represent teacher talk in classroom situations where a teacher may be using different voices and accents to dramatise a pedagogic point. In these scenario-based interactions, too, I found that the students were speaking in a variety of 'voices', in the sense of roles; since Stage 1 required them to plan how to express and exploit the information on their role-card, there were occasions when a student might ask questions in any of a number of speaker roles, such as:

- as the reader/understander of the content of the role-card
  (*this student has cashpoint card?*)

- as the reader-aloud of role-card text
  (*"without proper identification" + what means "proper"?*)

- as the suggester of language for the role-play
  (*can I say? + 'I don't catch your name right away' + 'would you show me your passport'*)

Hancock (1997) recently discussed the problem of representing what he calls the 'layers' of discourse, in the sense of on-record and off-record talk, in L2 group work. He also described instances where learners use cited language (L2 items in metalinguistic talk) and recited language (L2 words or expressions read aloud or repeated, sometimes without understanding). One can devise means of distinguishing between various sources of L2 (re)citations by students, as I did in the three examples above: using double quotation marks for direct quotations from the role-card; and using single quotes for words drawn in isolation from a student's long-term memory.

However, in the case of my role-play data, the situation is made more complex by the number of different 'voices' from which a student may select on any particular occasion and which it might be relevant to represent. There are instances of language suggested by another student, language elicited from another student, language read aloud from notes from earlier planning, language recalled from earlier planning, language elicited from the native speaker, language offered by the native speaker, and language read aloud from the printed role card. (I might add in passing that the problems faced

by anyone trying to transcribe classroom talk from a cassette are considerably less than those of L2 learners trying to understand in real time the distinctions the speaker wishes to convey).

4. Interaction in group work

I will now discuss two five-minute extracts from the first week's scenario lesson featuring the higher-level class (EAP 1). The extracts are precisely parallel, in that they start 10 minutes into Stage 1, and therefore allow a direct comparison of two simultaneous interactions.

4.1 Group 1

Group 1 comprised three students working with the tutor (D): two male students (shown as A and S) from the United Arab Emirates, and a female student from Peru (M). They received this role card:

> ***Student***
> *It is the week before your course starts. A few days ago you opened an account at a bank near the university and were given a piece of paper with the account number. Access to your account is by means of a cashpoint card, which you were told would be sent to your address. It has still not arrived. The money that you brought with you is nearly finished. You call in at the bank to see if you can take any money out. You have left the account number at home. The person you speak to is not the one you saw when you opened the account. How will you explain the position to them?*

In the transcripts, I have numbered the topical 'episodes' and shown them as separate series of turns, although in fact there may have been only a minimal gap, if any, between them. The opening move in an episode is shown in bold. One case where a student tried but failed to initiate a new topic is marked with a **#** sign, instead of a number. As both extracts begin 10 minutes from the start of Stage 1, the transcripts start in mid-episode.

EXTRACT 1

1
A: first thing he ask about identity not name I think + maybe I told him any name

2
D: well yeah but we don't normally just say you know "what is your identity?"
M: no
D: we say "what is your name?"
A: hmhm
D: identity is + what you are looking for as the bank clerk + but when asking + you ask somebody's name and "do you have some means of identification?" + like passport for instance
A: hmhm
S: ID card + + + ID card
M: something what you said?
D: 'means + means of identification'
M: spell please + I don't know the word
D: just like
A: 'mean'
D: 'mean' + M-E-A-N + 'means of identification'
M: oh
D: 'means of identification' + + "do you have some means" + M-E-A-N-S
A: 'means' mean 'some'?
D: "means + of identification" + "do you have some means of identification?"
A: what's mean of 'means'?
D: + + for example a passport
A: ah
D: ID + + any particular type of identification

8

A: ok that's the first thing + second? + + +

3

S: is this from a book? + this book?
D: it's from this book yes + *Study Speaking*
A: hmhm
D: all the speaking work comes from this book
A: hmhm
D: but we don't give you the book we give you + handouts from it
S: is this written by Tony?

4

A: yes + "what's your... account number?" + + you agree? + uh what's the next question? + "what's your account number?"
S: hm + + yeah *(laughs)*
M: not bad
A: *(laughs)*
S: "when you were born?" and "how are you called?" + yes + + then you will check on the computer + your name + uh his name

5

A: after we have account number uh?
M: the last one may be + + that question + "do you have any means of identification?" + for example passport + I think for me that's the last one + we don't have to be strict
S: hmhm + + but he will feel you know you + you are suspicious
M: *(laughs)*
S: I mean you + + no sorry + I'm suspicious +
A: no you are the
S: and he's suspicious on me *(laughs)*
M: yes

6

S: how can we say that?
D: you mean the student is also suspicious of the + + ?
S: no no + uh he is thinking and suspicious
D: yeah hmhm
S: so is there any verb to describe his situation? + he's doubt + he has doubt or?
D: well no I don't think there's a specific verb you could just say you know 'he + he thinks' or 'he wonders' or 'he's not sure'
S: ah
D: if you are + suspicious or not
A: you think he think *(laughs)*
D: he thinks. + +
A: ok after?
S: maybe both of us are suspicious + I mean the student and the teller *(laughs)*
M: yes *(laughs)*
A: *(laughs)*
S: "why you asking me + a lot of questions?"
M: "I just want to + open my account"
S: maybe they'll ask us + + you know they will ask us "where's the + +"

7

A: when I open account the bank don't have picture of customer or + in the bank?
D: picture?
A: yes
D: um + I think some banks do now + I think uh + + I think + is it the Royal Bank?

A: now in the card Visacard like this
D: yes but not all banks + most banks no they don't have a picture on it + + +

8
D: well I think the others + the other group is ready so + I think + **can you choose who's going to be the first** + first one to practise + which of the three + +
A: Shaheen maybe
S: **maybe you** *(laughs)*
M: **Shaheen**
D: **I hope we shall have time for one more** + one more after the first practice

9
A: but where we will do + uh this scenario?
D: just here + just here we'll probably just use the
A: oh there is a recorder now
D: no no it won't be + well it'll just be recorded on this + + not on the video

10
A: can I have help of my friend or... + when I go there?
D: you're on your own
Ss: *(laugh)*
S: it will be three against three
Ss: *(laugh)*
S: fighting
A: it's better *(laughs)*

11
D: who's going to be first?
A: ladies first *(laughs)* + +
M: **all right** + but I'm very bad
D: + don't worry + + +

12
D: *(to class)* **ok I think we are now ready**

That five-minute extract contains 12 episodes. The single line of Episode 1 shows the last of a series of turns in which the students plan the tactics for their performance. Episode 2 is initiated by the tutor D, who corrects A's **'he ask about identity not name I think'** and suggests appropriate expressions **'what is your name?'** and **'do you have some means of identification?'** Student A then tries to move on (**'ok that's the first thing + second?'**) but his attempt has to be put on hold while S asks the tutor about the source of the task material (Episode 3). Student A perseveres and initiates Episodes 4 and 5, both on tactical points. Student S then leads into Episode 6, asking the tutor for help with vocabulary; he seems to have in mind a verb like **suspect**, but is offered more general items (**think**, **wonder**, etc.). Episode 7 flows from a question - from student A - about banking procedures in Britain. The last five episodes in this extract (8-12) are all procedural: some are specific prompts from the tutor (8, 11 and 12) and the others are queries from student A about the procedure for this sort of task.

Summarising, we can see that almost half the topic episodes in Extract 1 are initiated by student A. He had in fact achieved the lowest entry score of the students in this class, and in the first 10 minutes of Stage 1 (prior to this extract) had asked a number of questions about the meaning of words on the role card. But in the episodes shown in Extract 1, student A's priority seems to be to sort out tactics for the performance and to clarify the task procedures. By contrast, the linguistically most proficient member of the group, student M (who had spent two years in Edinburgh some years earlier) initiates no episodes, although she does contribute actively to a number of them. All but one of the episodes

are narrowly oriented towards the task in hand; only Episode 7 goes beyond the world of the scenario, when student A asks about security procedures for opening an account at a British bank.

4.2 Group 2

The second group, working with the CA (shown as H), were assigned the role of the bank teller. They were an all-male group - one from Japan (Y), one from Saudi Arabia (F) and the third from Korea (P). They worked from the following role card:

> ***Bank teller / clerk***
> *A foreign student comes into your branch, saying that they opened an account some days ago. They have not received their cashpoint card, and want to make a cash withdrawal. You ask for the person's name. Your records show that an account has been opened in a similar name but the spelling is slightly different. This makes you suspicious. You cannot authorise a withdrawal without proper identification. The customer would have been given an account number when they opened the account, so you ask for this. As the senior staff are out at lunch, you have to decide whether or not to let the customer have any money. How can you check the student's identity without appearing to distrust them?*

EXTRACT 2

1
P: and secondly + main point
H: yes
P: for example + to explain problem
H: yes
P: and my situation
H: hmhm
P: um finally we choose the
H: finally it depends what they + say to us and what the + conclusion will be + they may refuse to give us money
F: yeah *(laughs)* maybe maybe
H: um *(laughs)* which will be a problem
P: yes
H: or + they may give us money so we'll be polite and say 'thank you'
P: yeah
H: if there's a problem then they'll maybe get angry

2
P: + + + pronunciation is very variety so + I + confusing now + because I was + + familiar with uh American pronunciation + is
H: hmhm
P: always is American + + but I arrived in January in Oxford
H: hmhm
P: I familiar with uh south + south southern southern English
H: yes
P: pronunciation + I moved uh two weeks ago it's very confusing *(laughs)*
H: and you're still + it's difficult to understand
P: I'm feeling familiar with + Scottish pronunciation
H: yes + + there might be quite a few + slang words
P: but Dennis and Gail
H: they're all English yes *(laughs)* exactly
P: *(laughs)* + +

3
H: where are you staying? + do you have a flat or a...?

P: **yeah flat**
H: **are you just on your own?**
P: **yeah**
H: **is it a private + flat?**
P: **private yeah**

4

D: *(approaches group)* **are you about ready?**
P: **yeah**
D: **selected your first victim?**
Ss: *(laugh)* + + +
P: *(to F)* **you are the first** + + + *(laughs)*

5

P: *(to H)* **what do you study in university?**
H: **um I study French and marketing**
P: **French marketing?**
H: **French and marketing + the two**
P: **two subjects**
Y: **not marketing in France** *(laughs)*
H: **no not marketing in France** *(laughs)*
Ss: *(laugh)*
H: **yeah + + I study that in + Glasgow**
P: **Glasgow University**
H: **it's not at Glasgow University it's at Strathclyde + University**
P: **I didn't know that**
H: **Strathclyde University + there's two + universities in Glasgow it's in the centre + and it's quite + modern + new compared to Glasgow University + so I've just finished my second year + and**
P: **uh I thought it was very strange because you are + from Glasgow + because some people take a job at + same university**
H: **I know + whereas I'm working in Edinburgh**
P: **you are lucky**
H: **yes it's because um + I live + + my family + home is near Edinburgh + so + in the holidays + I would normally go + home to Haddington + well Haddington which is near Edinburgh + and um last year I also worked in Edinburgh**
P: **so**
H: **it seems a bit odd + + but I don't have um anywhere to live in Glasgow just now**
P: **hm**
H: **I don't have a flat**

6

P: **but all + or most university give a job same university student or…?**
H: **yes they employ their students + I was just lucky** *(laughs)*
P: **+ + + um my friend he finished the study in Oxford University**
H: **hmhm**
P: **he applied some job in university**
H: **at Oxford?**
P: **England in England**
H: **hmhm**
P: **but they refused because + he competition between + + uh + he and that university's student**
H: **another student?**
P: **so they take + uh no + reject**
H: **oh a student from their university**
P: **from their university**
H: **so he didn't get the job somebody + from that university did?**
P: **but finally he get in + excess university**
H: **sorry?**
P: **excess + + excess**

F: Essex
H: oh Essex
P: yeah Essex + yeah
H: + + it's not very
P: very unusual + unusual case + he is very lucky + he told me
H: it's + not very + fair + if they were both qualified
P: fair? + **yeah fair** + + but uh + generally they take their university
H: their own students + + +
P: their own students + +

7
P: *(about the other group)* **they didn't decide yet + they prefer speak**
H: it's not that bad it's fine

8
D: *(to class)* **ok I think we are now ready...**

In that extract - precisely simultaneous with the first - we see a rather different sort of interaction, with elements much more like social chat than task-focussed talk. True, there is some brief task-related talk at the beginning (Episode 1), in the middle (Episode 4) and at the end (Episodes 7 and 8), but most of the time is devoted to apparently 'off-task' topics initiated by student P (Episode 2 on accents in English, and Episodes 5 and 6 on university study and employment) with the CA contributing one topic episode on accommodation.

4.3 Differences between the group interactions

The major difference between the two extracts is the extent to which the students in Group 2, working with the CA, talk in a 'literal frame' (Goffman 1974, cited in Hancock 1997) - in other words, as themselves. Four of the eight topical episodes in Extract 2 centre on the participants' or their friends' lives (problems with English, accommodation, study and jobs), rather than in the 'non-literal frame' of roles in the course material. Contrast that with the first extract, where the only 'real-life' episode was about bank security arrangements in Britain.

The two transcripts I have discussed cover roughly a quarter of the time spent on group work in EAP 1's lesson. Table 1 below sketches the wider picture, categorising all the topical episodes from Stage 1, which amounted to some 20 minutes' of speech and a total of 73 episodes (divided almost equally between the two groups).

Table 1. Episodes in rehearsal talk (Stage 1 of scenario lesson 1, class EAP 1)

		tutor	CA
Ss in non-literal frame			
general procedure		12	6
TEXT	content	7	2
	language	6	1
TASK	strategy	5	14
	language	5	1
Ss in literal frame			
	task-related	1	9
	"off task"	0	4
		36	37

Those figures suggest that the interaction between learners and native speaker was different in a number of respects. The group with the tutor spent more time on talking about the role-card text itself - both language and content - and roughly equal amounts of time on strategic and language aspects of the scenario task. On the other hand, the group working with the CA focussed mainly on the task they faced, and on how they should approach it strategically rather than on what they would say. There was also, as mentioned earlier, more talk in Group 2 in which the participants (CA and students) spoke in literal frame, something that was virtually absent from Group 1's interaction.

5. Implications

My study is still at an early stage and it remains to be seen whether the differences I have found between the two extracts from this particular scenario lesson will hold true for EAP 1's later lessons (and also for the lower-level class, EAP 2). But as far as the implications for teacher education are concerned, it seems to me that transcripts like these have a potential value in raising teachers' awareness of what goes on in group work. We have read a great deal recently about the importance of finding ways to help language learners to 'notice' lexico-grammatical and discoursal features of language in communication (e.g. Schmidt 1990, Swain 1995, and Thornbury 1997). It seems to me equally important that teachers should 'notice' what is going on during group work, so that we can decide whether, when and how to intervene (Lynch 1997).

Let me suggest how these particular transcripts could be used for that purpose in teacher education. On a pre-service course, one might ask trainees to categorise student contributions (initiating a new topic, answering a question, responding to a criticism, etc.); to identify episodes in which students focus on language form (e.g. resolving comprehension difficulties, such as Group 2 encountered over **Essex/excess**, or asking for lexical help from each other or the native speaker); or to evaluate the success of a student's contribution. Analysing transcripts in this way could make trainees aware of the range of participant involvement in interaction, and so help them to appreciate the need to offer learners a varied diet of classroom speaking tasks.

In an INSET workshop for more experienced teachers one might focus on an issue such as on-task and off-task talk. My suggestion for using these particular transcripts would be to issue them to workshop participants with the following question: *"If you were the teacher in this class, which of these two extracts would you be happier to overhear as you monitor the two groups?"*

I suspect that many in the teaching profession would feel that Group 1's interaction (with the tutor) represents better use of class time. The students are more clearly 'on task': they are rehearsing for the performance to come; they appear to be paying more attention to (their problems with) the language. But I would argue that the extract featuring Group 2 might well provide a more effective learning experience in the long term, since their interaction seems to carry the extra 'charge' of engagement with topics of real-life interest to the participants themselves. It could, admittedly, be objected that time spent 'just chatting' is time diverted from preparing the task, but in fact the reason Group 2 were able to move on to talking about real life is that they had already finished the rehearsal task they had been set. The CA had chivvied them through the preparation by asking them what they were going to do and say, while the tutor preferred to allow his group the time and space to work things out for themselves. It seems to me that either approach might be appropriate, depending on the aims of the lesson. An INSET workshop based on discussion of these transcripts could focus on this issue of whether off-task talk is 'off the point'.

My argument here is simply that professional discussion of that sort of issue can be facilitated by access to transcripts, which provide a sufficiently detailed basis for analysis, interpretation and debate. They enable us, literally, to see the point: to recognise learners' ideas and expressions that would inevitably escape the notice of the real-time observer. Providing we can find satisfactory ways

of reflecting the complexities of features such as 'layer' and 'voice', classroom transcripts offer great potential for our development of, and as, teachers.

Note

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QUESTIONS OF PRESENTATION: EVALUATING SUCCESS IN EAP SEMINAR SKILLS CLASSES

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Abstract

In this paper I discuss my adaptation for teaching purposes of a research-oriented framework, the Communicative Outcome system (Yule and Powers 1994). Having applied it to data from discussion episodes in English for Academic Purposes (EAP) seminar skills classes, I conclude that it offers the teacher a practical means of monitoring learners' performances and of providing them with feedback.

1. Introduction

This paper stems from a pragmatic concern with helping teachers - primarily myself, at this stage - to recognise signs of learners' improvement and to enable us to guide their efforts to become more effective listeners. There are plenty of sources of advice on ways of creating a supportive classroom atmosphere for teaching listening. Buck (1995) is perhaps the best article-length summary, and there are books such as Ur (1984), Anderson and Lynch (1988), Underwood (1989) and Rost (1990). But what is lacking in the methodological literature is a more detailed account of the tactical moves open to the teacher who wants to evaluate listening as it happens, in order to give feedback on performance. Those writers who have addressed issues of listening skill assessment, such as Rost (1990) and Thompson (1995), have tended to focus on the design of tests for summative evaluation - testing achievement at the end of a course - rather than for formative evaluation of the sort that Gillian Brown has argued for (e.g. Brown and Yule 1983, Brown 1986, 1995). Brown argues that teachers need a means of diagnosing what has caused learners to do poorly in specific listening tasks, in order to give them guidance and practice that will help them to do them better subsequently.

Here I will be focusing on the assessment of two-way listening skills, rather than on one-way listening (e.g. to cassettes or broadcasts). This is for two reasons: firstly, it is easier to measure success on one-way tasks; secondly, I spend more time in the classroom trying to help students to be better interactive users of English than teaching one-way listening skills such as lecture note-taking. Let me expand a little on those two points.

2. Assessing one-way listening

The key reason for teachers' greater confidence in our ability to assess one-way listening is the stability of the input. In a typical listening class, students listen to pre-recorded material on cassette, and the teacher works with an Authorised Version of the text, in the form of a transcript. If we know what was said and what was meant, then we can compare it with the students' reconstruction of what was said - e.g. their notes, or answers to questions. However, assessing success in two-way listening activities is altogether more complex. First, the participants in EFL communication are, naturally, likely to be L2 learners, so that what they hear as listeners in an interactive task is less correct and less clear than the equivalent message produced by (most) native speakers. Secondly, in all but the most controlled tasks, the teacher cannot know in advance what the speakers are going to say and has to evaluate the listener's response as it is produced in on-going discourse.

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3. One two-way listening genre: the discussion

The particular genre of two-way listening I want to consider is academic discussion. I am using the term 'discussion' in a highly specific sense, to refer to the segment of talk that follows the main speaker's presentation in a seminar, when members of the audience ask questions and make comments about what the presenter has said. There are three aspects of this type of discussion that make it more difficult for the L2 learner than the classic paired information-gap task. Firstly, it involves a more complex pattern of turn-taking, with the initiative shifting from the presenter to the listener-who-asks-a-question or to the listener-who-follows-up-another's-question. It is reasonable to assume that it is more difficult for a listener to bid for a turn among a group of fellow listeners than to be the sole partner in a pair task.

Secondly, the content of the discussion is intellectually more demanding than the type of information often featured in paired tasks. The location of shops on a street map, or of garden furniture in a park, is of limited cognitive interest – though I fully recognise the value of such tasks in stimulating the type of talk that demands precision of expression and interpretation. As well as being more challenging, the content of academic discussions may take on a particular intrinsic value, since the students participating in an EAP seminar may want to grasp what a speaker is saying because the information is relevant to their own academic field.

Thirdly, there is the socio-cultural dimension: individuals' assumptions about appropriate seminar behaviour. Frequently students bring from their home culture negative attitudes to asking questions in a public setting; the very act of questioning is regarded in some cultures as a direct challenge to the speaker's expertise (Pica 1987), or as an admission of ignorance or inattention (Rost and Ross 1991), rather than a positive indication of intellectual curiosity, as it tends to be in the Western academic context. (For further discussion of this issue, see Lynch 1994).

Academic discussion, then, presents considerable difficulties for the listener. From the teacher's point of view, the main problem of judging the success of individual listeners' interventions in discussion is bound up with the underlying purpose of the discourse. It represents what Duff (1986) called a *divergent* task, in which participants engage in interaction with no single predetermined solution. This is in contrast to *convergent* tasks, such as 'Find the Difference' or 'Describe and Draw', where those taking part have a shared goal and need to reach agreement.

4. Evaluating success in academic discussion

In the specific form of discussion I am concerned with, there is an additional factor that makes evaluation difficult: it is the learners, not the teacher, who decide both the form and the content of the input. This creates a communicative situation in which negotiation of meaning arises 'naturally', but in ways that are beyond the teacher's control. So discussion is markedly different from the sort of information-gap tasks commonly featured in both L1 and L2 communication research, which are designed to allow the researcher 'privileged knowledge of the state of affairs which the speaker is trying to describe' (Brown, Anderson, Shillcock and Yule 1984: 76-77).

I do not have space here to deal with negotiation of meaning in any detail; for recent reviews of research, see Lynch (1996) and Pica (1997). In brief, the main reason for interest in negotiation is the claim that the interaction modifications made in order to resolve comprehension problems may enhance eventual progress in the L2 (Long 1985). The precise psycholinguistic connection between short-term comprehension and long-term L2 learning remains a matter of dispute (e.g. van Lier 1990, Gregg 1993), although there is some evidence that negotiated learner/teacher and learner/learner classroom communication can create the conditions for L2 progress (e.g. Pica, Lincoln-Porter, Paninos and Linnell 1996).

For my present purpose, suffice it to say that a great deal of time and effort has been devoted to devising tasks artfully constructed to require negotiation of meaning. However, it is precisely because so much emphasis has been placed on 'channelling' learners into negotiating meaning that there is a risk that when evaluating their performances, we will focus on the *process* of negotiation rather than the *product achieved*. To counter this, Yule and Powers (1994) proposed a means of assessing the quality of the product of information-gap tasks: the 'Communicative Outcome' system, shown below.

Table 1 Communicative Outcome: an assessment category system

1. **No Problem**: A problem exists but is not identified by either the sender or the receiver.
2. **Non-negotiated Solutions** a. **Unacknowledged Problem**: A problem is identified by the receiver but not acknowledged by the sender. b. **Abandon Responsibility**: A problem is identified by the receiver and acknowledged by the sender, but the sender does not take responsibility for solving the problem, either by saying they will skip it, leave it, never mind it or forget it, or by telling the receiver to choose any location or path. c. **Arbitrary Solution**: A problem is identified by the receiver and acknowledged by the sender who then makes an arbitrary decision about some defining feature of the location or path. The key element here is not accuracy, but the arbitrariness of the decision which does not attempt to take the receiver's world into account or to make the receiver's world match the sender's.
3. **Negotiated Solutions** a. **Receiver's World Solution**: A problem is identified and acknowledged by the sender who then tries to find out what is in the receiver's world and uses that information to instruct the receiver, based on the receiver's perspective. b. **Sender's World Solution**: A problem is identified and acknowledged by the sender who then instructs the receiver to make the receiver's world match the sender's, ignoring whatever information the receiver provides which does not fit the sender's perspective.

Source: Yule and Powers (1994)

The CO system, designed for research rather than for teaching, shifts the focus from the counting of tokens of negotiation to the evaluation of what the task participants actually achieved. From the point of view of the task designer, the most successful outcome is the negotiated 'receiver's world' solution, since that requires the speaker to take account of the listener's perspective and reach a mutually satisfactory outcome. However, the system was intended to deal with interaction on the type of communicative task in which the designer controlled the distribution of information to maximise the potential for negotiation. As I have said, it is more difficult to assess performance on a divergent task such as discussion, and so I decided to see whether it is possible to simplify the CO framework to assess learners' success in navigating their way through discussions, by reducing the evaluative decisions to two: *Did the speaker and listener need to negotiate meaning?* and *Did they succeed in reaching a satisfactory answer?* I realise that reducing the original system to two high-inference questions risks ending in oversimplification for the purposes of research, but I felt it was worth trying it out as a teaching aid. My adaptation takes the form of a four-cell matrix (Figure 1).

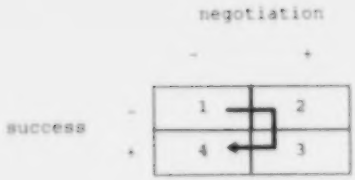

Figure 1 The simplified Communicative Outcome matrix

The cells are numbered to represent progress as a clockwise movement from 1 to 4. The least positive outcome is Cell 1 (non-negotiated communicative failure), with Cell 2 indicating an unsuccessful attempt at negotiation, and Cell 3 a successful negotiation; Cell 4 could represent the optimal outcome - mutual understanding without the need for negotiation.

5. Evaluating a learner's success

I have tested the practicability of the matrix by using it to analyse the routine classroom recordings of 'Kazu' (a pseudonym), a Japanese economics undergraduate who attended three weeks of the IALS pre-sessional EAP course, on which I taught one component of the course, an afternoon class in seminar skills. I had noticed from the start of the course that Kazu had much more difficulty than others in understanding spoken English, whether it came from a native speaker (e.g. the teacher's instructions and recorded texts) or from his peers. This weakness was reflected in his score on entry (51% on a dictation test), which was the lowest in his class. I have discussed Kazu's overall listening ability and possible reasons for his limited success elsewhere (Lynch 1997); what I would like to do here is examine his discussion performances in chronological order and categorise them in terms of the CO matrix.

The seminar skills classes consisted of three sessions per week over three weeks - a total of 15 hours. The first four sessions comprised preparatory practice for seminars, based on a mixture of plenary, pair and group activities using published EAP materials (Lynch and Anderson 1992). Sessions 5-9 were devoted to short seminars given by each student in turn, the first on either education or employment (core themes of the course), and the second on a specialist topic chosen by the student. Each seminar was in three stages: an initial presentation by the student; discussion of points and questions raised by the audience; and feedback given privately by the teacher.

Stages 1 and 2 of all the seminars were tape-recorded for the purposes of feedback and review. Apart from the prepared presentations for his own seminars, which I will not discuss here, Kazu contributed to eight discussion episodes: two as a listener to other students' seminars, and six as the speaker in response to questions about his presentation (see Table 2).

Table 2. Distribution of Kazu's contributions to discussion

Session	Content	Kazu's contributions
1-4	Preparatory practice	-
5	Core seminars 1-6: Education	Episode 1 as listener
6	Core seminars 7-12: Employment	Episodes 2-3 as speaker
7	Specialist seminars 1-4	Episode 4 as listener
8	Specialist seminars 5-8	None
9	Specialist seminars 9-12	Episodes 5-8 as speaker

Clearly, Kazu participated relatively little as an audience member. In fact, only one of his two 'listener' episodes - the one in session 7 - involved *initiating* a question; his contribution in session 5 was to join what I have called a 'multilateral negotiation' (Lynch 1995), that is, a discussion episode in which the listener's question is misunderstood by the speaker and clarified by other participants. I propose now to look at four of the six episodes following his two presentations in sessions 6 and 9, and to categorise them in terms of the CO matrix.

Episode 2

Park: I didn't understand what you said about + 'the competitive rate' + for public officials

Kazu: it's becoming higher

Park: I don't understand what + the 'competitive rate' is

Kazu: uh competitive rate ?

Park: hmhm + I don't know what that is

Kazu: the meaning of ?

Park: yes

Kazu: um + + it means there are + many peoples + many peoples want to become + + want to enter + want to take the entrance examination + for

Nobu: public official ?

Kazu: yeah

Park: uhuh + so the competition is getting stronger ?

Kazu: yes

Park: right

This followed Kazu's presentation on graduate employment in Japan. Park, a Korean student, asked Kazu a question that appeared to be a request for clarification of content. In his next turn he made clear that what he wanted was an explanation of the term 'competitive rate' and, once that was established, Kazu provided Park with the answer he required, i.e. that more and more people are competing for civil service posts in Japan. I would place this in Cell 3 of the CO matrix (+ negotiation, + success).

Episode 3

Paul: under this recession + after your graduation + what kind of strategy do you have?

Ss: *(laugh)*

Kazu: uh *(laughs)* pardon me?

Paul: what kind + after graduation + + I think you are student at university?

Kazu: yes

Paul: what kind + +

Kazu: yes?

Paul: and after your graduation + + what kind of strategies + what kind of plans + will you have under this recession?

Kazu: *(laughs)* ah yes + I'm thinking about + oh + I'm also thinking about + taking an examination for city + officials

Here Paul's question was intended to be humorous; he wanted to know what Kazu himself proposed to do, in view of the bleak employment prospects he had outlined in his presentation. The joke was not lost on the other students, as their laughter shows. Kazu laughed, too, but apparently out of embarrassment, as he had to ask for help. Paul helpfully backtracked and reformulated 'strategies' as 'plans'. Kazu then laughed again, this time appreciating the joke and giving an appropriate answer. Another case of successful negotiation - Cell 3 on the matrix.

Episode 4

Kazu: I'd like to make some comment

Liam: please

Kazu: generally the climate of Scotland is said + severe + and awful

Liam: yes that's + the usual case

Kazu: and I think one of the reason is that the wind is very strong

Liam: yes it usually is

Kazu: because wind is very related with our temperature + our body temperature

Liam: hm ?

Kazu: yes + yes + so

Liam: uh ? + you mean body temperature ?

Kazu: yes

Liam: human beings' temperature ?

Kazu: yes + so + I think + the main + uh + point + uh + + + main component of + + Scottish weather is wind

Lian: well it can never be complete when you only talk about one element + in + in climate + so I cannot say which one is the main + + figure + or main element when we talk about climate + + and I do not believe that the wind + because we are talking about atmospheric elements + conditions + so the human bodies' temperature in fact has little influence on the overall atmosphere conditions like wind + I don't think so + + + ok thank you

This was Kazu's first attempt to venture a comment on a presentation - on climate, by a Chinese student, Lian. Given that it went badly awry - with Lian understanding the exact opposite of the cause-effect relationship that Kazu was suggesting - it is possible that it put Kazu off the idea of contributing to discussion in subsequent seminars; certainly he remained silent for the other three seminars in session 7, and throughout session 8. This episode I would categorise as Cell 2 (+ negotiation, - success).

Discussion episodes 5-8 arose after Kazu's specialist-topic seminar on industrial policy in Japan. The first two were both successful after negotiation - multilateral in one case and bilateral in the other - and for reasons of space I will pass over them here. There then occurred the only example of an exchange that can be counted as Cell 4 (successful without the need for any negotiation). Jean asked a question about the transfer of employees between branches of the same company, which Kazu had mentioned are a feature of Japanese company strategy:

Episode 7

Jean: um + do they have meetings in which they discuss their problems of the transfers ?

Kazu: uh it depends on the case but it usually + um seldom happens such a meeting

Jean: ok

This exchange is perfectly straightforward and belongs in Cell 4 - successful communication without any need for negotiation. This makes it the sort of exchange which researchers into negotiation discard as uninteresting, but which teachers (and learners) would hope for more often!

Episode 8

Paul: I heard that the lifetime employment was now drooping in Japan + is that right ?

Kazu: is ... ?

Paul: dropping + +

Lian: decreasing + + decreasing

Nobu: decreasing

Kazu: yes decreasing

Paul: in Japan

Kazu: yes?

Paul: is it right ?

Kazu: yes

Paul: + + + thank you

Again we have a case of multilateral negotiation, this time involving four students. But this one is more difficult to place on my CO matrix. It seems to be Cell 3, since Paul closed by thanking Kazu for his answer, but on the other hand Paul's long pause before 'thank you' suggests that he had actually hoped for a fuller answer. I think he may have been inviting Kazu to *expand* on the topic, rather than simply to *confirm* that what he had heard about Japan was right. This may be a case of inter-cultural differences in pragmatic interpretation.

6. Discussion

I chose to focus on Kazu's discussion performances to assess the feasibility of using the simplified CO matrix to evaluate success in the classroom. Inevitably, analysing the performance of one learner in this way leads us to speculate about the specific problems he encountered and their possible causes and remedies, but I would like to concentrate on the potential of the CO framework, rather than Kazu's particular difficulties. Does the CO matrix reveal or confirm any progress over the three weeks?

On measures of one-way listening used in the EAP course, Kazu did in fact make considerable progress (for detailed discussion, see Lynch 1997). However, if we plot his sequence of discussion episodes in seminar skills classes over the three weeks, there is no clear pattern of improvement in his two-way listening. Figure 2 shows the results of my analysis of the discussion episodes presented in the previous section. (Those in which he participated as listener are shown in italics, and those in which he was the presenter are shown in bold).

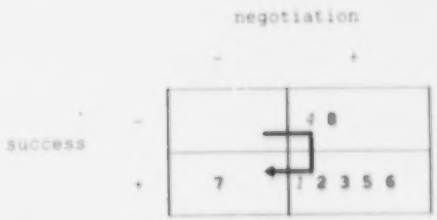

Figure 2. Kazu's success in discussion episodes

If we consider Kazu's overall 'strike rate' of successful communication, we can see that he did rather well: six of his eight episodes fall into the bottom row (+ success). Similarly, if we look for indications of willingness to negotiate, then he scores seven out of eight; only episode 7 required no negotiation. On the other hand, there is no clear evidence of any progress over the period of instruction. In the final session 9, for example, we can see that in the space of some 5 minutes he participated in four episodes (5-8) whose outcomes range across three different cells. So, in Kazu's case, the answer to the question that led me to try out the matrix is that it provides no clear picture of progress - other than, perhaps, the fact that his only completely non-negotiated success (episode 7) occurred in the final afternoon session of the course.

It could be that the matrix reflects an accurate picture and that Kazu actually made no clear improvement in two-way listening. If so, was he unusual? To see whether there was any evidence of general progress within his group, I plotted all the episodes for all the seminars - see Fig. 3

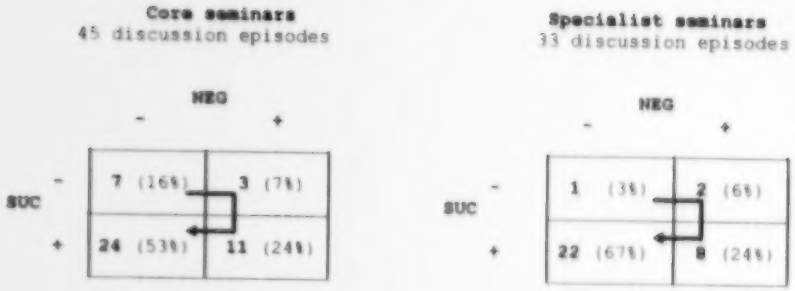

Figure 3. The class's success in discussion episodes

If we consider simply the *amount of negotiation* that went on, the two sets of seminars produced almost identical proportions in the right-hand cells (31% and 30%). This could be taken as a sign that little had changed over the week between the two sets of seminars. However, when we look at the *ratio of success to non-success* by comparing the upper and lower cells, there is some indication of a change - from roughly 3:1 (77% success against 23% non-success) in the core seminars, to 9:1 (91% against 9%) in the specialist seminars. On that basis we might justifiably claim that the students in Kazu's group achieved greater success the second time round.

That change may have occurred for reasons other than an improvement in listening, of course. It could have been due to *production* factors such as improved delivery of listeners' questions or presenter's responses; or to *social* factors, e.g. the group's greater familiarity and ease with each other. Alternatively, it could be related to the presenters' *expertise* in their specialist topics; there is research evidence (Whyte 1995) that L2 learners' oral performance can be enhanced when they are talking on a familiar topic.

I find it interesting that the overall *number* of questions fell between week 2 and week 3, from 45 to 33. We could interpret this positively, as a consequence of improvements in expression and presentation by speakers in the seminar talk. However, the discussion stages of the specialist seminars were in fact longer than those of the core seminars the week before, so that, although there were fewer questions, the presenters' responses were longer and more complex. Again, this ties in with findings by Whyte (1995) and in earlier work by, for example, Woken & Swales (1989) and Zuengler (1993). On the *other* hand, the fact that listeners said relatively little in discussion in the specialist seminars could be a negative indication that the presenters' relative authority made listeners feel more inhibited about raising queries on subjects they knew less about.

7. Conclusion

My aim was to see whether the simplified negotiation/success matrix based on the Communicative Outcome system might offer teachers - rather than researchers - a workable instrument for assessing learners' performances. Trialling the matrix has underlined for me that we do indeed need to evaluate learners' performance in discussion in qualitative terms (communicative success) and not just from the quantitative point of view (the presence or absence of negotiation). Negotiation is a tool to use when necessary - a means to an end, rather than an end in itself.

Two-way listening tasks based on learner-controlled input have rarely featured in negotiation research, yet learning activities such as EAP seminars play an important part as rehearsal for (academic) life beyond the classroom. Teachers need some way of monitoring and commenting on learners' success in negotiating meaning in divergent tasks of this sort. It may be that the real value of the CO matrix will be as a means of feedback, rather than of evaluation. It offers a simple means of coding the process and outcome of learner-to-learner discussion, and teachers could use it to monitor differences in the effectiveness with which learners deal with questions and discussion points, and then to provide them with feedback.

The way I envisage using the matrix is for the teacher to tape the learner's performance and then give him/her both the cassette recording and also a completed matrix sheet, possibly with brief annotations. The learner would then listen to (or view) the recording and see whether their own perceptions of what was said and done meshed with the teacher's version of the performance, as conveyed in the matrix. If the learner felt the teacher had misjudged part of the interaction, s/he would be able to check with the other student(s) involved in the exchange. Whether the matrix is completable under real-time constraints, and how much additional information the teacher might need to provide in order to guide learners' subsequent review of their recordings, remain to be investigated in classroom use, but I believe it is a potentially useful tool in helping learners cope with the complexities of two-way listening in a foreign language.

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BUTTERFLIES IN THE RAIN FOREST? ETHNOGRAPHY AND THE BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENT

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Abstract

This paper gives an overview of a pilot study conducted to investigate the perceptions of students studying Business English as an option on the year round General English programme at IALS. It focuses more specifically on two areas - the research process itself and the use of reflexive journals in relation to ethnographic data collection.

1. Introduction

The title of this article originated from the negotiation process (necessary in the particular institution in which we work) involved in obtaining the resources (that is *time*) to work on the research project which produced the reflections forming the basis of the article. It draws on material from the pilot study, focusing on two areas, the research process itself and the use of reflexive journals, rather than on observations made or conclusions reached.

Having taught English for Business at IALS for several years, we already had profiles of the 'types' of students who study Business English as part of our year-round General English programme. However, we felt that it would be valuable to have some detailed case studies of individual students to further inform our course development, materials writing and classroom teaching. We wanted to focus on students' perceptions of their learning experience, and therefore decided to adopt a qualitative methodology following an ethnographically oriented approach. As far as possible we wanted to maintain hypothesis-free data collection, recognising that because of our familiarity with our classroom and institutional contexts we tended to operate on the basis of certain unchallenged assumptions. We felt that, by our attempting to make ourselves "strangers" to our familiar setting and investigating the natural setting, fresh hypotheses might emerge which would shed new light on the familiar. In addition we were particularly interested in the ways in which our students interacted with each other and became socialised into the IALS learning environment.

However, before we could begin this investigation, we needed to justify our approach to those within our organisation responsible for the allocation of research time. There follows an illustration from our initial negotiations for research time in which we were required to justify our interest in simply observing what was happening without having any specific hypothesis to test.

> *H: Isn't it a bit like a naturalist going into the rain forest and saying, I'm going to see what's happening without having any fixed object of study?*
>
> *G: Well, not really. We've already identified two particular butterflies* (two students who had agreed to participate in our study).

We could continue our rain forest analogy. We needed to see the butterflies within the context of the rain forest. The habitat was as important as the particular markings on their wings....

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2. The Business English context

Business English is an option on our EFL year-round programme and forms one of the three daily one-and-a-half-hour classes attended by our students. Students on the programme come to study with us for varying lengths of time ranging from three weeks to two years. Some come to prepare themselves for postgraduate study in Edinburgh or elsewhere in the UK, others to improve their job prospects after graduation by increasing their English proficiency. Business English, in particular, attracts a good proportion of short-stay participants. These are often business professionals who can only leave their jobs for a short period. It was of particular interest to us, therefore, to find out more about students' progression from newcomer to full member of the IALS community and the effect of that process on their language improvement.

We do not cater for students with very low levels of English Language proficiency. Our Business English students have at least a good Intermediate level of English language proficiency, but this is a level which it is often very difficult for students to progress beyond. It has been argued that language problems are as much sociological in origin as linguistic (Crymes 1978), and this view ties in with an ethnographic perspective. Ethnographers view language acquisition "not only as a mental, individualistic process, but one that is also embedded in the sociocultural contexts in which it occurs" (Davis 1995:432). A better understanding of the students' view of their learning experience within the specific institutional context has practical as well as theoretical interest. It could enable us to improve the learning environment.

> The people involved can make an effort to create optimum conditions so that learners can get on with the business of learning in the best way that they see fit, and can help each other in the process.
>
> (Van Lier 1989:40)

3. Literature review

It is not our intention here to provide a detailed bibliography pertaining to qualitative research methodology, but only to briefly consider the area. Within applied linguistics the classic quantitative/qualitative debate still appears to have some life left, although the battle has long since been forgotten by most social scientists. It is now more widely acknowledged that ultimately all methods of data collection are analysed qualitatively (Fielding and Fielding 1986) and that all analyses are "implicitly numerical" (Becker, cited in Fielding and Fielding 1986). There is, however, still the suspicion that qualitative data, whilst producing "real and deep" material (Zelditch 1962:566) sacrifices "hardness". Lazaraton (1995) assesses the position of qualitative methodology within applied linguistics and concludes that we are in the same position today as we were 15 years ago with quantitative research methodology. Applied linguistics journals still predominantly reflect the domination of the psychometric model, as a study of 50 published applied linguistics articles demonstrates (Nunan 1991). This is perhaps strange if we consider the long standing ties between linguistics and ethnography and the role played by the ethnographic practice of participant observation in investigating language in its social contexts.

The necessity for hypothesis-led research can operate as a constraint which may prevent the discovery of new insights and inhibit the formation of new research questions, as the following quotation illustrates:

> Why doesn't an ethnographer test hypotheses? The problem here is with the term *test*. Normally in quantitative research designs, testing hypotheses involves manipulating variables so as to isolate specific factors and observe their effect on learning outcomes. Thus, the researcher needs to hypothesise what the significant relationships are before the research

project can be carried out. An ethnographer, instead, determines the significant relationships only after observation in the field. Secondly, in a hypothesis-testing research design, the crucial variables reflecting these relationships will, as far as possible, be isolated from the surrounding context in order to permit measurement or counting. Counts are then compared with those of similarly isolated variables in contrasting relationships. This generally involves some manipulation of the natural setting and always involves reducing the complexity of the variables so that they appear to be clear, unambiguous and countable.

(Ulichny 1991:201)

Given that our learners are not beginners engaged in mastering the language system but students struggling across the vast plateau we label "Intermediate", we felt that a quantitatively based study would yield little of interest to us. We needed a research methodology which would enable us to relate to the complexity, identifying new variables. Wolfson (1986) suggests that there are two approaches towards collecting data for linguistic analysis - observation and elicitation. By elicitation she means all techniques in which the subjects are aware that what they say is being studied by an investigator, such as questionnaires and interviews. Both approaches can be problematic. In the first case there is no real way of controlling variables; in the second, awareness of oneself as an object of study may endanger the validity of the data. However, one advantage of the ethnographic approach is that hypotheses emerge from the process of collecting and analysing the data. We opted for a combination of both observation and elicitation.

4. Data collection

Ethnography requires "intense immersion in the data" (Van Lier 1989:45). It is a cyclical process:

- data collection
- data analysis
- formulation of hypotheses
- testing hypotheses through more focused data collection
- further analysis

The process continues until redundancy is reached. Our pilot study - the first phase of the cycle - consisted of collecting material for case studies of two students who we judged to be typical of the types of students attending our courses. Both were intending to stay for at least one eleven-week term (a period long enough to collect longitudinal data). One was Japanese, one German - nationalities representative of a significant portion of our student intake. Both students were happy to become subjects for our study. The benefits were two-way. Increased interest in our students' learning experience provided them with the opportunity for individual attention and included a number of one-to-one sessions which they perceived as beneficial for their study of English. We intended to observe the students in a variety of formal and informal contexts including both Business English and General English classes. Semi-structured interviews were planned at set intervals during their stay (see Appendix Two for an outline of the initial interviews).

Our experience in using this approach to data collection stems from different areas: counselling techniques and postgraduate ethnographic research. The early interviews were recorded on audio cassette, later interviews were written up in field notes because of the artificiality induced in recording interviews between people who, by this stage, knew each other reasonably well. In addition, both researchers kept field diaries to record formal class observations and informal observations, conversations, informants' comments and our own reflections on the research in progress. We intended to make use of as many different sources of data as possible, including written documentation and accounts of different participants of the same events.

> Ethnography often involves a combination of techniques, and thus it may be possible to check construct validity by examining data relating to the same construct from participant observation, interviewing and documents.
>
> (Hammersley and Atkinson, 1983: 199)

Appendix 1 lists the sources used for the study.

5. Researching the research process - the use of reflexive journals

Very early on in the project some of the dilemmas traditionally associated with the role of the participant observer emerged as important for us. There are various problems associated with observing and analysing real-life situations, studying actions as they occur to obtain an insider's view but maintaining an outsider's perspective:

> a learning situation in which researchers have to understand their own actions and activities as well as those of the people they are studying.
>
> (Burgess 1982 :1)

Schwarz and Schwarz (1969:89) put the question :

> How far does a social scientist mesh himself into the world so that he finds out the things he is interested in while simultaneously avoids the danger that his "enmeshment" will become a source of distorted information?

One of the advantages of the qualitative, ethnographic research model is that issues related to the researcher's bias and degree of "enmeshment" can be opened to investigation. Reflexive journals - introspective journals that display the investigator's mind processes, philosophical position and bases of decision about the inquiry - can be kept (Guba and Lincoln 1985). "Thick" description produced from ethnographic research - "densely textured facts" (Geertz 1973) - allows room for reference to these. Researchers' own accounts form a very valuable part of any ethnographic account and allow the reader to assess the validity and also the transferability of the research conclusions to other situations.

Before beginning data collection, the two researchers undertaking this study separately recorded in writing their own preconceptions in three areas:

1. Assumptions about the learners' expectations and experiences.
2. Personal beliefs and values regarding learning and teaching in the Institute for Applied Language Studies.
3. Applied linguistic theory which might be used or drawn upon.

Throughout the research period reflexive journals were kept by both researchers. Later these accounts also provided useful comparisons and sources of "triangulation" of data. The excerpts which follow are included to illustrate the role of reflexive journal keeping. They are cited in detail in order to give readers access to the researchers' own assumptions. One of the duties of the ethnographer is to provide readers with enough primary data to enable them to make their own judgements of the analysis and records kept in reflexive journals can help serve this function.

> any ethnographic account should contain a wealth of primary data ... coupled with the obligation to order and make sense out of his material the ethnographer is duty-bound to present sufficient primary data that his readers have an adequate basis for rendering their own judgements concerning the analysis.
>
> (Wolcott 1975:112)

The problems involved in teaching a class and attempting to observe particular students at the same time were areas highlighted by both researchers. The Business English class was taught primarily by one teacher and observed by the other, but the roles were reversed at one point during the study. Both researchers were involved in observing the two students during other (General English) classes. These were the written comments of both researchers on the difficulties of the joint teacher/researcher role:

> *Feel ambivalent about joint teacher/researcher role. Can you be an ethnographer in your own classroom? I feel intrusive and leave the questioning to G. as the bona fide researcher.*
>
> *I'm finding it difficult to engage R and S in conversation. I feel as if I ought to avoid them and am drawn more to the others - to compensate? I feel that every time I ask them a question they'll be wondering if I'm writing down the answer or not. I think it's not a possible task for me to appear to be too actively involved in researching their responses to my classes.*
>
> *(Researcher A)*
>
> *It was hard not to see students as subjects through the eyes of the class teacher or as a teacher but to try instead to see what they saw e.g. the lesson/teacher/participants through the eyes of the student. I don't think I succeeded. I can't unknow what I know.*
>
> *(Researcher B)*
>
> *Acting as teacher it was almost impossible to detach R and S mentally from the group and consider their learning and social experience. Such an effort is already involved in juggling (against a consciousness of time) some notions of the lesson's intended destination (activities to be accomplished; statements to be made or information to be elicited or imparted); assessment of how much has been accomplished how well by how many at any one time; judgements about corrections to be given; guidance, clarification of misunderstanding in relation to an exercise or the pattern of interaction or the intended outcome ; dealing with questions that arise from individual agendas; analysing future work that needs to be done; assessing level of interest in the topic or activity; summatively trying to make sense to the students of my impressions of what the lesson's about; consciously making forward and backward references to other parts of the course; trying to evince (quietly) energy and enthusiasm and confidence in them and the lesson's activities - as a sort of fuel to keep the lesson's engine running. In other words dealing with different pedagogic/intellectual/social/reflective issues concurrently. I was not able to see (empathise with) what S was experiencing or R. I could not see beyond what I saw as class teacher, which was either people in twos or threes or an individual for one-tenth of class time.*
>
> *(Researcher B)*

An appreciation of the difficulties involved in combining the role of observer with the role of teacher led us to the conclusion that we would need to include more observation in less formal settings as well as the classroom. We needed rich description of ordinary events - lunchtime conversations and social occasions, for example.

6. Emerging hypotheses

Our in-depth focus on the two students allowed for the exploration of different aspects of the learning experience. One of the advantages of research of this type is that hypotheses emerge rather than being imposed. Although much of the detail of our observations is of interest only to us and personal to our subjects, reading and categorising the data allows for the emergence of hypotheses which can then be investigated by further research using similar techniques or indeed other techniques - surveys and questionnaires for example. Many of these issues are context-specific - the question of whether to provide students with a coursebook or continue using handouts is one such example. This was something that one of the two subjects in our study felt strongly about and is an issue which could be followed up. Other, more interesting issues related to the process of socialisation into the IALS community. We formed the hypothesis that increasing comfortableness with the learning environment has a favourable influence on learning up to a point, after which the effect is either neutralised or operates negatively. Our research question then would focus upon discovering the optimum length of stay for students on our courses.

7. Conclusion

As already suggested, one of the main advantages of the pilot study was to give us feedback on the research process itself. It helped us reflect upon the ethnographic paradigm for research within applied linguistics and ELT generally. More practically, it allowed us to rehearse our research method and subsequently modify our approaches for future studies of this kind. Our experience led us to the view that we needed to adopt a less overt approach to observations, relying more on informants' accounts of informal social contexts as well as formal learning contexts whilst continuing our methods of recording our observations with continued use of the practice of keeping reflexive journals.

Investigating ways to improve students' ability to use English as a second language is not a process that lends itself happily to quantitative investigation. There is a continuing need for grounded (Glaser and Strauss 1967) "thick" description of language learning contexts moving beyond the isolated classroom event. In order to provide these appropriate research tools need to be developed and accounts of research processes are an invaluable aid in moving towards this goal.

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APPENDIX ONE

DATA SOURCES

Interviews with students

Business English class observations

General English class observations

Informal observations - coffee breaks, lunch breaks

Social programme events

First Day interviews and tests

Interviews with class teachers

Documents - Business English Needs Analysis questionnaires/course evaluation forms

Interview with accommodation officer

Samples of students' written work

Administrative information - letters of enquiry; applications

APPENDIX TWO

FIRST INTERVIEWS WITH BUSINESS ENGLISH STUDENTS

Explain in general terms purpose of research:

- to informally study the experience of two BEYR students for a 4-5 week period (may lead to useful information about learning/study patterns).

Explain reasons for selecting them, emphasising randomness of them fitting our criteria:

- New to the Institute
- Enrolled for Business English.
- Here for 4-5 weeks at the same time.

Explain how it will affect them:

- Need their co-operation in answering questions about themselves and their experience at IALS and in Edinburgh; will begin with an informal interview and will wish to talk to them informally a couple of times and at the end of their period of study; will observe some of the lessons they attend.

Reassure them about confidentiality and anonymity of information collected.

Get permission to record the interview.

INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Previous visits to Edinburgh/Scotland/UK. Memories and impressions?
2. What are your reactions/impressions so far about anything you've experienced since arriving in Edinburgh?
3. Previous visits overseas from own country
4. Feelings about being abroad for several weeks
5. Feelings about being a language student
6. Who do you know here?
7. Contacts with British people recently?
8. Reasons for studying English at this time
9. Reasons for studying Business English
10. Reasons for coming to Scotland and IALS

11. How did you learn about IALS?

12. Previous study of Business English

13. Previous study of General English

14. Level of English achieved

15. What do you want to learn?

16. How will you know you have been successful?

17. What do you expect lessons to be like/

18. What did you know about the courses before you arrived?

19. How did you feel about taking the first day test?

20. What were your reactions/impressions of the City Bus Tour?

21. What did you do at lunch time?

22. Occupation and/or course of study

23. Use of/need for English

24. How do you feel about using English? (is it something enjoyed/novel/challenging/natural/uncomfortable etc.)

25. What did you bring with you to support your English studies/remind you of home/do while in Edinburgh?

26. What would you like to have brought but didn't?

27. What would you like to do while in Edinburgh?

28. Family background

TRANSLATOR, TRAITOR, SOURCE OF DATA: CLASSIFYING TRANSLATIONS OF 'FOREIGN PHRASES' AS AN AWARENESS-RAISING EXERCISE

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Abstract

A system for classifying (coding) translations of sentence-length or similar material is presented, and exemplified with codings of entries in the Dictionary of Foreign Phrases and Classical Quotations *(Jones, 1925). Problems in coding are discussed: they relate especially to intertextuality, intention and ownership. The system is intended for pedagogic use (after further trialling), and the place of such classifying activities within advanced foreign-language courses involving translation is considered. The recommended approach is, in some respects, analogous to Widdowson's approach to teaching literature. Students are encouraged to adopt a relatively non-judgemental, descriptive attitude to particular translations, but also to question the general ideology of a book such as Jones, and to explore implications for their own learning.*

1. Introduction

This article is a sequel to Parkinson 1995a (though it can be read independently), and pursues in a small way the agenda outlined there of finding analytical activities which can help learners in advanced foreign-language courses involving translation. In both cases the emphasis is on language awareness, a necessary prelude to satisfactory performance, rather than on performance itself. Whilst the earlier article focused on texts of 'normal' length (say one page upwards) and on general features such as purpose, formality and register, the present one looks at the translation of short, typically one-sentence, proverbs and sayings and similar 'free-standing' (see 2.2) material, and offers a category system for coding such material. The system is illustrated with sample codings of entries from the *Dictionary of Foreign Phrases and Classical Quotations* (Jones, 1925).

Sections 2 to 6 describe in turn the dictionary, the coding system, some problems of coding, the results of (very limited) trialling, and some pedagogical issues.

Before all this, a comment on the academic literature in translation. There is a great deal, but rather little that seems directly relevant to or is found practically helpful by the advanced students I teach and meet - some trainee translators, some general students who use translation for language improvement or need it to pass examinations. Such students consistently praise Duff (1981), Baker (1992), the early work of Newmark (e.g. Newmark 1982, 1988), and sometimes recent material for particular pairs of languages, e.g. Agorni & Polezzi 1996, Roberts 1996, Gutknecht & Rölle 1996, or the seminal Vinay & Darbelnet 1958. Such works are typically most helpful for those beginning serious translation, typically at upper intermediate level, but at higher levels there seems to be nothing comparable: a critique of Bassnett 1991, Gentzler 1993 and Venuti 1992, and the wider tradition(s) they represent, is offered in Parkinson 1995b.

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2. The book chosen for analysis

2.1 Description

According to its title page, the *Dictionary of Foreign Phrases and Classical Quotations* is "edited with notes by Hugh Percy Jones, B.A." - no other writers or helpers are mentioned - and published in 1925. It seems, however, to be an unacknowledged reissue of an earlier work: the whole tone and layout seem Victorian, there is a "present German emperor", the "present century" is the nineteenth, and *fin de siècle* is translated (p. 232) as "extremely modern, up to date". A "Publisher's Note" (p.v.) mentions a "predecessor", called *Deacon's Dictionary of Foreign Phrases*, and tells us that the present work costs "about double" but "contains nearly ten times as much information".

A few extracts from the introduction will give an idea of intended audience and purpose:

> The writings of the Press constantly contain allusions and references which presuppose some knowledge of foreign languages and literature on the part of both the writer and reader. The same may be said of our public speakers. Although it has ceased to be a habit in the House of Commons for honourable members to denounce one another in a phrase borrowed from Lucan or Virgil, (.....) still a happy phrase from the treasury of the classics is often found to be no mean ally in enforcing an argument.
>
> Nowadays we are all citizens of Cosmopolis, and we do not hesitate to import a phrase, even if clothed in a strange dress, should it serve our purpose better than the more familiar words of our mother tongue. (.....) For example, how common is the use of such Latin phrases as: *Deus ex machinâ; Quantum mutatus ab illo; Nolo episcopari;* (.....) (s)uch French phrases as *Bon chien chasse de race; Vogue la galère* (.....).
>
> At the same time, while these and numerous other phrases are in common use, it must not be forgotten that a large number of the reading public - indeed, an ever-increasing multitude - are often in doubt as to the meaning of the commonest phrases of this kind. A great majority have never had the opportunity of cultivating any language other than their own, while, in the present day, technical education has very properly diverted the attention of many from the study of languages to what is of more immediate practical utility. Such people, when confronted by a quotation from a foreign language, may be tempted to exclaim with Berchoux, *Qui nous délivrera des Grecs et des Romains?* A confession of ignorance is always unpleasant, and it is for the convenience of those troubled ones that this book is primarily designed.
>
> (pp. x-xi)

The book, then, is not aimed at academics, but at the anxious self-improver.

It contains about 14,000 entries, mostly of one line but some of eight or more, from Latin (127 pages), (Classical) Greek (56), French (166), German (41), Italian (71), Spanish (52) and Portuguese (13). Pages xii to xix introduce each language separately, all in very positive terms but with a hint of racial stereotyping, e.g.:

> Whether the Moorish strain in his blood is responsible for the Spaniard's love of sententious sayings we need not inquire.
>
> (p. xix)

The introduction to Greek is perhaps the most revealing:

> I fear that some people, on seeing that more than fifty pages of this book are devoted to Greek quotations, will be inclined to exclaim: *Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?* Greek has, unfortunately, ceased to be popular as a subject for study. "What is the use of Greek?" - a question often put to long-suffering pedagogues by their charges - is now more often heard from the lips of those whose age ought to have given them more wisdom. But, as in the past:
>
> > "Græcia capta ferum victorem cepit, et artes
> > Intulit agresti Latio"
>
> so we may be permitted to hope that Greek literature is only receiving a temporary rebuff (.....)
>
> It is true that we seldom hear Greek quoted nowadays; but this is a fault that may be remedied. I am told that, within recent years, an alderman has been heard to adorn his speech with excerpts in the language of Sophocles. Why should not this wholesome infection spread to our Lord Mayors?
>
> (p. xiv)

Jones, then, was writing for a world where the social importance of (a certain kind of) foreign-language knowledge seemed firmly entrenched, but where the gaps between socially expected knowledge and actual knowledge were becoming hard to ignore.

2.2 Reasons for choice

The choice of this text type, a book of 'phrases and quotations', has a clear rationale. Such 'phrases' (in fact usually sentences not phrases in syntactic terms) can be viewed as free-standing, as having meaning of their own as mini-texts, independent of particular texts in which they might be embedded. Their translations can therefore, in principle, be evaluated independently, without having to take account of multiple features of cohesion and coherence as one would with a translation of a sentence from a novel, newspaper article or other longer text. An analogy might be made with evaluating answers to a series of short, independent algebra questions, as opposed to the single steps in a ten-page proof. Pedagogically, this ought to provide the many 'fresh starts' seen as important for valid language testing (e.g. Hughes 1987: 36-43), and arguably therefore for teaching too.

Of course, no text is entirely free-standing, and in some ways 'phrases and quotations' even have more links with the linguistic 'outside world' than a typical sentence from a novel - see Section 4. In my view, though, this does not invalidate the above rationale, and 'phrases and quotations' have something distinctive to offer, though only as a not too frequent alternative to more typical textual material.

Within the chosen text type, the choice of such an old book is a little more arbitrary, and I may decide upon a more modern one for later pedagogic use - see Section 6. Nevertheless, the book chosen does have certain advantages:

(i) It is almost entirely free of the technical terms which occupy so much of every remotely comparable modern work. There are none from science, economics, international affairs, etc., only a few from law. This is entirely to the good, as it leaves far more room for students to give their own opinions: if told that *Pauschalberichtigung für Forderungen* means 'flat-rate provision for trade receivables', most of us feel we must just accept it.

(ii) A textbook from the heyday of foreign-language quotation in English may have a certain extra authenticity; modern equivalents may be seen as marginal text-types.

(iii) The ideological slant of certain entries (see Section 3, Categories 11 and 13) may be, if not totally obvious and indisputable, at least more so than in contemporary texts. This should help students inexperienced in ideological 'deconstruction'.

(iv) Such deconstruction might profitably be extended to the book as a whole, helping students to question, and consider alternatives to, the overall approach to language and language learning which a book such as Jones represents - see Section 6.

3. The coding system

This section presents, with examples, 13 of the 15 categories in the current (first) draft of the coding system. I have removed two categories which seem very infrequent, renumbered others, and slightly simplified some definitions. For the sake of clarity (but perhaps unfairly, see Section 4), I have omitted in the examples some alternatives and notes given by Jones.

Category 1: "Straight Translation"

This is not necessarily 'word for word', but as near to this as (easily) permitted by the grammar and lexis of the two languages. Examples:

Les rois ont les mains longues.	Kings have long arms. (p. 289)
Wer oft schiesst, trifft endlich.	Who shoots often, hits at last. (p. 387)
Nullum imperium tutum, nisi benevolentiâ munitum.	No government is safe unless fortified by good will. (p. 82)

Category 2: "Small Changes"

There are one or more changes, not obviously necessary, such as singular for plural, abstract noun for related personal noun, use of loose synonym, change of syntax, omission of detail. These are not so large as to prevent translation of 'general meaning', nor do they fall into Categories 11 or 13 below. Example:

Les pots fêlés sont ceux qui durent le plus.	The cracked pot lasts longest. (p. 289)

(More literal translation: 'Cracked pots are the ones that last longest'.)

Category 3: "Large Changes - Unsystematic"

Though placed third to facilitate initial understanding of the system, this is logically the final category, a miscellaneous 'dustbin', where the coder places any translations with changes too great to be included in Categories 1 or 2, but not adequately accounted for by any of the processes mentioned in Categories 4 to 13. Example:

Was vernünftig ist, das ist wirklich;
und was wirklich ist, das ist vernünftig.
Hegel

Whatever is, is right. *Pope*

(p. 384)

(More literal translation: "Whatever is rational/reasonable is real and whatever is real is rational/reasonable.")

Category 4: "Verse to Verse"

Verse in the foreign language is rendered as verse in English, retaining the general sense but with substantial changes probably dictated by rhyme and/or metre. Example:

De la Fortune on vante les appas;
Méfions-nous de la traitresse;
Non-seulement la dame n'y voit pas,
Mais elle aveugle encor tous ceux
qu'elle caresse. *Albéric Deville*

Some say that Fortune's ways are kind;
Still she's a traitress; shun her wiles!
Not only is the goddess blind,
But blinds the men on whom she smiles.

(p. 219)

(More literal translation: "People praise the charms of Fortune; let us mistrust the traitress; not only is the lady blind, she also blinds all those she caresses.").

Category 5: "Misunderstanding"

The translator seems to have misunderstood the original text, or perhaps there has been some clerical mistake later in the editing process. Example:

Den Himmel überlassen wir
Den Engeln und den Spatzen. *Heine*

We leave Heaven to the angels and the spirits.

(p. 357)

(Correct translation: "..... to the angels and the sparrows".).

Category 6: "Proverb to Proverb"

The translation is significantly different from the original at the word level, but a recognised proverb of (arguably) similar general meaning has been substituted. (This is normally in English, but sometimes in Latin or Greek.) Example:

Viele Händ' machen bald ein End.

Many hands make labour light.
(p. 383)

(More literal translation: "Many hands soon make an end".).

Note: If the coder feels that the chosen proverb is *not* equivalent, another category, probably 3, 12 or 13, should be chosen.

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Category 7: "Specialised Use"

The translation offered is clearly not the literal or normal meaning of the original words in the original language, but may well be an accurate reflection of how they are (or were) normally used in the English-speaking world. Example:

Proxime accessit.	Honourable mention. (p. 96)

(More literal translation: "He/she came next.").

Category 8: "Short Translation"

The translation is shorter than the original; what is included is (fairly) literal, but a significant part of the overall meaning is omitted. Example:

Der Horcher an der Wand hört seine eigne Schand.	The listener never hears any good of himself. (p. 358)

(More literal translation: "The listener at the wall (eavesdropper) ...").

Category 9: "Essential Explanation"

The translation is longer than the original, but the added elements are clearly necessary as an explanation of what would otherwise be obscure. Example:

Ex pede Herculem.	Judge of the whole from a part, as you can guess the size of Hercules from seeing only his foot. (p. 40)

(More literal translation: "Hercules from foot.").

Category 10: "Long Translation (Non-ideological)"

The translation is longer than the original. The additional material is or includes an interpretation or explanation, but this does not fit Category 9, nor does it in any obvious way suggest the influence of particular moral, political or social opinions or assumptions of the translator. Example:

Was du liebst, das lebst du. *Fichte*	A man forms his life according to the standard of what he considers gives happiness. (p. 384)

(More literally: "What you love, you live.").

Category 11: "Long Translation (Ideological)"

As Category 10, except that the additions/changes do reveal or suggest a filtering through, or the intrusion of, particular moral, political or social assumptions of the translator. Example:

Fides ante intellectum	The pupil must accept without questioning his master's instructions. (p. 44)

(More literal translation: "Faith before intellect/understanding".).

Category 12: "Semantic Change with Identifiable Pattern (Non-ideological)"

This category and the next differ from the other eleven in that they are used to describe a pattern of changes observable over several (at least four) translations in the same corpus. These are changes, not fitting any of Categories 4 to 11, which entail the deletion, addition, or change of elements from a particular semantic field. Within this type, Categories 12 and 13 are distinguished in exactly the same way as Categories 10 and 11.

An example of apparently non-ideological changes of this type is the frequent removal of the 'animal' element from French proverbs translated into English:

(a) A bon chat, bon rat.	Well matched; set a thief to catch a thief. (p. 184)
(b) A rude âne rude ânier.	Like cures like. (p. 191)
(c) Faire d'une mouche un éléphant.	To make a mountain of a molehill. (p. 230)

(More literal translations: (a) "To a good cat, a good rat"; (b) For a stubborn donkey, a stubborn driver"; (c) "To make an elephant of a fly".

Category 13: "Semantic Change with Identifiable Pattern (Ideological)"

For definition see Category 12. By far the largest and clearest sub-division of Category 13 is male-generic translation of gender-neutral originals. The (easily avoidable) use of generic 'he' occurs hundreds of times, and the German *der Mensch* ('human being') and *man* ('one') are both frequently and predictably translated as 'man' (*der Mann* in German).

Some readers will feel that this says nothing about the translator's personal views, only about the linguistic norms of the time. Perhaps the following example will be more persuasive.

A dix-huit ans, on adore tout de suite; à vingt ans, on aime; a trente, on désire; à quarante, on réfléchit. *Paul de Kock*	At eighteen we learn to adore a woman in a moment; at twenty we love her; we yearn for her at thirty; but at forty we consider whether she is worth the trouble. (p. 186)

(More literal translation: "At 18, one adores at once; at 20, one loves; at 30, one desires; at 40, one thinks about it.").

Jones's version seems to me sexist in four ways. Not only is a statement potentially applicable to men and women assumed to apply only to men, not only are our readers assumed to be (or 'interpellated' as - see Althusser 1971) men, not only is the woman apparently without choice, but the

decision is presented as a balancing of (probably economic) advantages which demeans both sexes. Perhaps Paul de Kock meant all this, but should the translator so assume?

Contrary to expectation, very few non-gender-related examples have been found for Category 13: no obvious racism, Grundyism, etc., no hostility to any political and social group. All that has emerged so far, very marginal at that, is a tendency to delete religious elements, e.g.:

Il est juste que le prêtre vive de l'autel.	The labourer is worthy of his hire. (p. 239)

(More literal translation: "It is just (fair) that the priest should live by the altar.").

4. Some problems and issues in using the coding system

Any coding system, except the very simplest, encounters problems of interpretation and justification: attempts to establish inter-coder reliability for categories nearly always lead to disappointment, and reliability is only a necessary, not a sufficient, condition for validity. Potential ambiguities, procedural problems and questionable assumptions will occur to any careful reader of Section 3. In the present section, I will not attempt to deal with all such problems, but only to touch upon three issues which may be of some theoretical interest - intertextuality, intention and ownership - and two practical choices affecting the ground rules of coding.

Intertextuality is a broad term covering everything from direct quotation of another text, through parody, rebuttal, etc., to faint and elusive echoes of old texts which may just slightly affect our response to new ones. It is everywhere in language: like the butterfly's wing in chaos theory, everything potentially affects everything else. In the area of 'famous quotations', though, it is particularly salient: few of these are wholly original, many belong to a family of variants, not just across languages but also within the same language. Newton (for example) did indeed say something about seeing further by standing on the shoulders of giants, but this was not, and not even offered as, original, having earlier versions in at least five languages over two millenia.

Jones often seems unsure how to cope with such networks. He has a few favourite English phrases such as 'set a thief to catch a thief' and 'coals to Newcastle', used several times per language for very different originals. He makes some (to me) doubtful links, e.g.:

Si cadere necesse est, occurrendum discrimini. *Tacitus*	(If we must fall, let us boldly face the danger.) "How can a man die better than facing fearful odds?" (p. 110)

but he misses or leaves unspoken some much clearer links, e.g. between these two entries:

La donna è mobile.	Woman is a fickle thing. (p. 431)
Varium et mutabile semper femina. *Virgil*	Woman is ever fickle and changeable. (p. 122)

Nonetheless, Jones clearly has considerable knowledge of intertextual links which I lack, and which may make some of my codings 'unfair' or simply wrong. *A fortiori*, students with very limited literary knowledge may in particular cases of intertextuality be as helpless as those who do not understand *Pauschalberichtigung für Forderungen* (see Section 2).

Issues of intention, and whether it matters, are now a commonplace of literary criticism and theory. What did an author mean when he/she wrote certain lines, can we to some extent ignore intention (see Wimsatt & Beardsley 1954), can readers (or 'interpretive communities', see Fish 1980) create their own meaning? Space permits only one example from this complex area, lines from Boileau which Jones quotes, translates and comments upon in a footnote, as follows:

Quotation:

Après l'Agésilas,
Hélas!
Après l'Attila,
Holà!

Boileau

Translation:

After Agesilas,
Alas!
After Attila,
Great Heavens!

Comment (extract):

This was Boileau's epigram on the production of *Agésilas* and *Attila*, the two tragedies written by Corneille in his declining years, in which the tragedian showed a marked falling off in dramatic power. It is said that Corneille naively supposed Boileau wished to praise and not to condemn these plays (.....)

Rather unusually for this book, we are given access to two 'meanings'. More characteristically, it is implied that one is (laughably) wrong. My own reading of (almost) original sources (e.g. Boileau-Despréaux 1808, 1966) suggests a third interpretation: that the first two lines were originally published alone; that they were intended by Boileau and taken by Corneille as critical; that the version here, published much later, was an attempt to placate. All this of course may affect the translation of '*holà*'! For present purposes, it does not matter who is right, only that in such cases it may be difficult or impossible to find out.

The ownership issue is addressed by Jones himself:

> (T)here are an enormous number of short quotations which are, so to speak, shreds from the fabric of a well-known passage of a Latin author. These passages are so familiar to those who are themselves well versed in the literature of the Romans that a word or two quoted from them becomes a finger-post to the entire passage. But I fear that to the average man the information that *virginibus puerisque* is a quotation from Horace, or that *cacoëthes scribendi* are words of Juvenal, would not materially add to his respect for the genius of these writers. (.....)
>
> Sometimes, too, the popular sense given to brief excerpts from the Latin is different from the meaning of the original. For example, *Noli me tangere*, which is the Vulgate version of the risen Christ's "Touch me not!" addressed to the Magdalene, is now commonly used to indicate a threatening attitude. Again, Horace's *Vestigia nulla retrorsum* and Virgil's *O fortunatos nimium, sua si bona norint* are often applied in a way not meant by the poets.
>
> (pp. xii-xiii)

There is probably a case for (at some level) accepting 'wrong' quotations and translations, just as we (at some level) accept the German *der Talkmaster* for 'talk-show host', or the Japanese *Madamu Kiraa* ('madam killer') for a man who courts older women (examples from Foley & Hall, 1993:40).

Applying this to practical coding, I have used Category 1 or 2 where the translation seems an (almost) accurate reflection of established 'misuse'.

I end this section by reporting and briefly discussing two practical decisions on 'ground-rules'. First, I excluded from coding entries of two kinds:

(a) All entries consisting of a single word.

(b) Entries consisting only of a noun phrase (e.g. *table d'hôte*) or only of an adverbial phrase (e.g. *tant pis*), **unless** they were presented as or recognisable as a quotation from literature or from a real or apocryphal historical speech, e.g.:

Das Ewig-Weibliche. — The eternal feminine.
Goethe

(p.355)

This is attributed to Goethe and recognisable to literate Germans as a quotation from *Faust*.

Second, where Jones offers more than one translation, I based my coding on **the first translation which was not in brackets**.

Both these decisions reflected my ideas of how a modern, monolingual reader might use the book - preferring a normal dictionary for single-word items, and assuming that the first translation not in brackets was offered as 'best'. All such decisions, though, have an element of arbitrariness, and introduce a bias. In this case, the main effect is to reduce the dominance of Category 1, especially as Jones often puts literal translations in brackets. This may be 'un- sir' on Jones, but for pedagogic purposes (see Section 6) it has the virtue of promoting more varied coding, and probably more discussion.

5. Trialling of system and reliability study

I used the system to code a pseudo-random sample of 600 entries, 200 each from the French, German and Latin sections of Jones. I asked a friend to double-code a 30% sub-sample (180 entries), and thus obtained preliminary inter-coder reliability measures for the system. The results of both procedures are given below. The approach was exploratory and not rigorously controlled, and the coders doubtless untypical, so no great claims can be made for these results, but they may provide inspiration for readers to attempt their own analysis.

Table 1: Results of Brian Parkinson's Codings (per cent)

Category / Language	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
French	49.5	22.5	2	0	0.5	5.5	1.5	5.5	0	0.5	2.5	3.5	6.5
German	50.5	20	1	3.5	0.5	15	0	0	0.5	2.5	0	0.5	6
Latin	41	24.5	1	0.5	0	17.5	1	0.5	1	3	3	1.5	5.5
Average	47	22.3	1.3	1.3	0.3	12.5	0.8	2	0.5	2	1.8	1.8	6

Table 2: Intercoder Reliability Results (per cent)

Notes:
1. Reliability percentage = (agreed codings ÷ total codings) x 100.
2. Disagreements are counted under category chosen by first coder (BP).
3. Separate entries are given only for cells where first coder made at least three entries; columns with no such cells are omitted.
4. 'Overall' figures give equal weight to each relevant coding; 'average' figures give equal weight to each relevant cell; 'overall average' figure meets both criteria.

Category / Language	1	2	6	8	11	12	13	Other	Overall
French	82	63	84	100	50	100	81	43	75
German	89	80	86	X	X	X	100	33	81
Latin	65	27	92	X	40	X	33	47	68
Average	79	57	87	X	45	X	71	41	75

Agreement was higher than expected, though of course this does not validate the whole system: a notorious and unavoidable problem of ICR trials is that they do not provide enough data for rarer catgories, where agreement is often lowest.

6. Pedagogical implications

This system is intended for use (after refinement) with students, but has not yet been so used, so much of the present section will be programmatic and speculative. I hope in a future article to provide data on actual use, and invite readers to try the system themselves and contribute to this.

I begin, though, with a warning. Many students in classes labelled 'advanced', with or without a translation component, have problems much more fundamental and urgent than anything relating to matters discussed in this article: they have yet to master (parts of) basic grammar, or the mechanics of writing, or basic distinctions of formality and register. Until such weaknesses have been, if not eliminated, at least greatly reduced, analysis or criticism of published translations is likely to be vacuous and counter-productive.

My second point is that evaluation does not mean, at least not mainly, classification as 'good' or 'bad', 'right' or 'wrong'. It is a matter of describing and classifying: some of the descriptions will contain value judgements, but these should be secondary and usually tentative. This applies to almost any kind of evaluation - see Parkinson et al. 1982 for an example from a totally different field - but even more so here, as only an extremely small percentage of Jones's translations are outright mistakes - see Section 3, Category 5. The words 'source of data' in the title of this article, besides providing a (non-Scottish!) rhyme, show how I think books such as Jones should be used. They are not primarily models to be followed, nor Aunt Sallys (Uncle Percys?) to be derided and bettered. Instead, they are linguistic data to be understood. The (more or less!) non-judgemental approach which modern linguists have applied to pidgins and creoles, dialects and sociolects, child language, interlanguage, parent talk, foreigner talk, teacher talk, forms such as *der Talkmaster* (see Section 4), and most recently and tentatively (e.g. Cameron 1995) to the naïve prescriptivism of non-linguists, can be extended to translation as a social activity and product. A student may conclude that Jones (for example) produced this or that translation around 1890, with this or that logic in his framework, and this or that relevance or required modification in the student's own.

Thirdly, the fact that the system, even after refinement, is likely to be less than totally reliable, does not invalidate it for pedagogical use. If subjectivity is too great, the system will indeed be useless, but a margin of Heisenbergian 'Unschärfe' (persistently mistranslated as 'uncertainty'!) may be acceptable, even beneficial, as it encourages students to discuss the merits of rival codings. An analogy may be made with Widdowson's influential approach to literary criticism (Widdowson 1992; see Gilroy & Parkinson 1996:217-8 for summary and discussion), which encourages 'precision of reference in support of a particular interpretation, but emphatically not precision of interpretation itself' (p. xii). What advanced foreign-language-through-or-for-translation teaching needs, and the present article aspires (in a very small measure) to further, is what advanced foreign-language-through-or-for-literature has obtained from the work of Widdowson and his followers: a move towards systematicity, and away from vague obeisance to (e.g. Leavisite) models forever unattainable by many, but a move which stops short of spurious objectivity and prescriptive channelling, and leaves room for individual response and learner-centred teaching.

Finally, I would imagine that, after working with a book such as Jones for any extended period, both students and teachers would want to question the whole *raison d'être* of such a book, and to explore related issues of language in society and language learning. Why are such books now less popular? Is it because we are less well educated and so ignorant that we will not even attempt to understand and use such material? Or are we *better* educated, able to formulate our own ideas, and thus no longer in need of the wise sayings of dead white males? As for foreign language learning, should we base this on large chunks of language learned as wholes, or synthesise everything from smaller units, or make some compromise? Do we have a real choice in this, or does the 'compromise' happen anyway (see e.g. Weinert 1995 and her references)? If we can or must use chunks, should they include material of the kind found in Jones?

Rather than answer these questions, I will hide behind Goethe, as Victorianised by Jones:

> Was du ererbt von deinen Vätern hast,
> Erwirb es, um es zu besitzen.
>
> What thou hast inherited from thy fathers, be sure thou earn it, so that it may become thine own.
>
> (p. 384)

I am not sure that Goethe would like 'be sure thou earn it'. What about 'acquire', as *Spracherwerb* is after all 'language acquisition'?

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TO CODE OR NOT TO CODE?

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Abstract

This article considers arguments for and against the use of coding systems in classroom-based research and touches on some relevant considerations from ethnography and Conversational Analysis. The four authors each explain and elaborate on their practical decision to code or not to code at a specific point in a specific research project. Three have chosen mixed research designs, of which two involve some coding at the data collection stage, the third only as part of later analysis. The fourth author (Gourlay) concentrates on the data collection stage, and offers a five-part rationale for not coding at this stage.

1. Overview of paper

Sections 2 - 4 of this paper explain what coding systems are, and outline some of the arguments for and against using them in classroom research., plus some possible compromises. These sections are intended as background only: the issues have been discussed at length in numerous books, and we do not aspire to introduce new ideas at this level.

Sections 5 - 8, the individual case studies, form the kernel of the paper. In each of these we take one micro-issue from a different research project, which involved making a choice between coding and more qualitative data collection: we outline the issue, the decision taken and (where known) the outcome. The final section offers some tentative general conclusions.

Our four studies, although very different, may all be thought of as falling within a research tradition which emphasises process, and the classroom as a social setting. This is not to say that they are without relevance for other kinds of classroom research.

2. What is a coding system?

A coding system is a way of reducing (and, inevitably, interpreting) data - in our case, classroom events observed in real time and/or audio-recorded and/or video-recorded - by assigning them to a taxonomy of (usually pre-specified) categories, on one or more dimensions. We are concerned with such coding when used **for research purposes**, though other uses, especially in teacher training, are possible and indeed frequent, and for some systems (e.g. Flanders 1960, Moskowitz 1971), the research use is a minor offshoot of teacher training use.

Our first illustration is the Stirling system (Mitchell, Parkinson and Johnstone 1981), which can produce lesson codings such as the following (simplified example):

Time (minutes)	Activity	Topic	Grouping
0 - 2	Real	Routine	Whole Class
2 - 7	Imitation	Situation (Course Book)	Whole Class
7 - 12	Drill	Situation (Course Book)	Whole Class
12 - 21	L1	Language Point (Course Book)	Whole Class
21 - 23	Real	Civilisation	Whole Class
23 - 35	Real	Civilisation	Pairs (same task)

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A very different example is the BIAS system (Brown 1975), which requires the observer to tick boxes every three seconds. The categories in this system and an example (both as reproduced in Malamah-Thomas 1987), together with an extract from a completed sheet filled in by one of us, now follow:

Definitions

TL: Teacher lectures, describes, explains, narrates, directs.
TQ: Teacher questions, about content or procedure, which pupils are intended to answer.
TR: Teacher responds, accepts feelings of class; describes past and future feelings in a non-threatening way; praises, encourages, jokes with pupils; accepts or uses pupils' ideas; builds upon pupil responses, uses mild criticism such as 'no, not quite'.
PR: Pupil responds directly and predictably to teacher questions and direction.
S: Silence. Pauses, short periods of silence.
X: Unclassifiable. Confusion in which communication cannot be understood; unusual activities such as reprimanding or criticising pupils; demonstrating without accompanying teacher or pupil talk; short spates of blackboard work without accompanying teacher or pupil talk.

Example

T:	Well Today I thought we'd do three quizzes. We won't take the whole lesson (...) because I want to talk to you some of the time. The first quiz is this.	TL
	Can you fill in this sentence? See if you can do it in your books. Finished Joan?	TQ
	And Miri.	PR
Miri:	Yes	
T:	Finished?	TQ

The system in use

Practice Coding No. 2. Coder: B. Parkinson. Date: 26th. October 1995.

Videotape: British Council TLF 1, Lesson 1. Teacher: J. Fry.

Class: Beginner Adults, Hong Kong. Start: Start of Tape (00.19)

System: BIAS.

Seconds	1-3	4-6	7-9	10-12	13-15	16-18	19-21	22-24	25-27	28-30	31-33	34-36	37-39	40-42	43-45	46-48		49-51	52-54	55-57	58-60
TL	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/		/	/			/	/	/	/
TQ																					
TR													/			/					
PR	/																				
PV													/		/						
S																					
X																					

Seconds	61-63	64-66	67-69	70-72	73-75	76-78	79-81	82-84	85-87	88-90	91-93	94-96	97-99	100-102	103-105	106-108	109-111	112-114	115-117	118-120
TL			/			/														
TQ	/	/		/	/		/	/	/	/	/									
TR								Joke												
PR	/	/		/	/		/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/	/
PV																				
S																				
X																				

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There are hundreds of coding systems, varying enormously in their focus, their mechanics and underlying philosophy - for further discussion see the works quoted above, and also Chaudron (1988), Allwright (1988) and Spada (1997).

3. Arguments against, and alternatives to, coding systems

Almost since the beginning of systematic coding in research, but perhaps most strongly since about 1977, arguments have been voiced against it, and more generally against the quantitative approach to observation (which is not an identical concept - see below - but in practice the labels are often used interchangeably). Mehan (1977) makes the following criticisms of this approach:

(i) It focuses on teacher behaviour not student behaviour.

(ii) Time sampling 'obscures the sequential flow'.

(iii) It ignores 'contingent aspects of interaction', e.g. what happens to students who do not speak.

(iv) It ignores issues of students' competence in interpreting underlying functions of utterances.

(v) It ignores multiple functions of utterances.

(vi) It treats teacher and student behaviour as isolated acts.

(vii) It fails to relate the utterance of the classroom to the culture of the community.

All these criticisms had some force with regard to the coding systems common at the time, among which FIAC (Flanders 1960) and the closely related FLINT (Moskowitz 1971) were dominant; argument (i) is less true now, but the others remain powerful.

Of the non-quantitative approaches to classroom research, many use the label 'ethnographic', often with some prefix, adjective, etc. - General Ethnography, New Ethnography, Microethnography, Constitutive Ethnography, Ethnography of Speaking/Communication, Ethnography of Schools and at least 20 others (see Trueba & Wright 1980-1). Ethnography is not just a method of observation, but an approach usable in most kinds of FLT research (see e.g. Parkinson 1995): when applied to observation, it almost always implies trying to see events from the point of view of those observed - what categories they use, what rules they follow, what sanctions are applied when rules are violated. Ethnography may be concerned with 'socialisation', i.e. how (usually) teachers put pressure on students to conform to their expectations, or, more credibly in our opinion, with 'co-construction', how an event such as a lesson is shaped by the wants, needs, attitudes and beliefs, and resultant behaviour, of **all** participants, both teachers and students. (This invokes the principle that 'order is a produced orderliness', which we owe to Conversational Analysis (CA) - see e.g. Psathas 1995. CA may be seen as a kind of ethnography, or as a related approach, and its philosophy has influenced Sections 5 and 6 of this paper.) Ethnographers usually do not code at all, preferring continuous-prose accounts - what Geertz (1973) calls 'thick description' and Erickson (1986) 'rich description'. When they do code, they remain (arguably) 'qualitative' by not adding up totals of categories but using the coding to generate an account of typical sequences and other patterns, as in Van Lier (1988). An analogy may be made with study of the grammar or phonology of a language, which typically attaches far greater importance to establishing what patterns are possible, and what differences (of form) make a real difference (of meaning), than to counting frequencies.

A special issue of *TESOL Quarterly*, number 29, 3 (1995), is devoted to qualitative research, mostly of a loosely ethnographic type, and treats more fully the above ideas, especially in articles by Davis (1995) and Lazaraton (1995).

Another kind of 'qualitative' observation often appears under the label 'Action Research', or sometimes 'Participant Research'. (In principle these two kinds could simultaneously be ethnographic, but in practice overlap seems small.) Here the teachers themselves are researchers: Somekh (1993) identifies five stages:-

(i) (...) participants collaborate with each other and with outsiders to decide upon a research focus and collect and analyse data;

(ii) the process of data collection and analysis leads to the construction of theories and knowledge;

(iii) the theories and knowledge are tested by feeding them back into changes in practice;

(iv) to evaluate these changes, further data is collected and analysed, leading to refinement of the theories and knowledge, which are in their turn tested in practice, and so on and so forth (...);

(v) at some point, through publication, these theories and knowledge are opened up to wider scrutiny and made available for others to use as applicable to their own situation. This interrupts the cyclical process of research and action, but is useful in bringing the research to a point of resolution, if only temporarily.

Like ethnographic research, participant/action research may use coding in its classroom observation phases - (see Davies & Parkinson 1996 for a borderline example) - and it may also use quantification (see Hopkins 1993 for several examples), but it is more likely to use continuous-prose, mainly qualitative accounts.

4. Counterarguments and compromises

Whilst a very extensive body of arguments against quantification/coding and for qualitative approaches can be found in the literature, arguments on the other side are harder to come by. There are of course the original arguments for coding as opposed to no systematic enquiry at all - see previous references to Flanders, Moskowitz, Allwright, Chaudron, Malamah-Thomas - but the coding specialists' attitude to non-coders generally seems benign and tolerant, if ill-informed - that it is just a different kind of research.

Anecdotally, however, it appears that those who attempt purely qualitative classroom observation, at least within foreign-language teaching, often encounter problems. We cannot give full references for these, as some allusions are to unpublished research, or to early and private stages, or even to matters of legal or other dispute. Our impression, though, is that the problems encountered, or at least claimed, are of four main types:-

(i) When the research report is wholly or almost wholly based on teachers' own perceptions, it can seem rather bland: "We're all doing the same thing, it's the obvious way to teach, we're all communicative here .....".

(ii) When the researcher behaves as a fully-fledged ethnographer, rather than a linguist or language teacher, and uses (mainly at the report stage) the language of sociologists, this can alienate those observed. Paradoxically, efforts to incorporate teachers' and learners' own ways of seeing and talking can make things worse not better, as these are relativised in what can seem a patronising way.

(iii) Researchers may fail to satisfy their readers and to achieve their purpose in writing up data: for example Ph.D. candidates may be told that their work is not sufficiently 'objective', or 'scientific', or 'linguistic', whilst professional researchers, including 'experts' called in to evaluate a programme, may be warned that they are failing to provide the 'hard' evidence needed to satisfy funding bodies and other authorities.

(iv) More positively, it often happens that the researcher ultimately *wants* to code: whilst before data collection, or at least before analysis, s/he thought in purely qualitative terms, s/he decides after repeated passes through the data that s/he is, *de facto*, putting them into categories, and that it will be more insightful to him/her, let alone to others, if s/he makes this explicit. (Of course, this implies *post hoc* coding, which would not satisfy sociometric purists, but can have its own logic.)

Such a researcher rarely wishes to abandon all qualitative description, but may seek a compromise design which includes both this and coding-based information. Examples are given in the following sections.

5. Research on classroom culture: Edinburgh (Lesley Gourlay)

5.1 Introduction

This section describes the research design and outlines the research questions of a study which is currently in the planning, pre-data-collection phase, and offers reasons for *not* employing a coding instrument for the recording of classroom events.

The study will relate to a single, mixed-nationality, adult EFL class at the Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh. The broad focus of the study will be on what has been described as 'the culture of the classroom'. More specifically, it aims to look at the development of the participant rules and norms of discourse and action within a particular class over time. It assumes that these norms are not explicitly established at the beginning, but that they evolve as the class progresses in its career. This 'evolution' is seen as resulting from the contributions of both teachers and learners - a process of co-construction which is realised in the discourse and action of the classroom. This research aims to concentrate primarily on the learners' contribution to this process, looking at both their actions and discourse in the classroom, in addition to making use of semi-structured participant interviews.

The primary means of data collection will be classroom observation and non-structured note making, which will be backed up with audio or video recording of the classes in progress. This will be augmented by participant interviews with the learners.

5.2 Data collection

5.2.1 Classroom observation and field notes

As the investigation will take the form of a case study, the aim will be to observe the class from as near the beginning of the course as possible. Notes will be taken on the interaction of the students in class, their behaviour in group work and whole class work, their interaction with the teacher and with each other. Particular attention will be paid to behaviour which might be seen to redefine participant rules, test boundaries or explicitly negotiate norms of participation. In-class observation may also present an opportunity for the recording of negotiation, which may serve to back up any inadequacies of the audio/video recording.

5.2.2 Audio/video recording of the classes in progress

The aim is to video-record the lessons in progress, or at least audio-record them. If consent is given for video, it would be preferable, as it provides more information about the grouping, interaction, turn management, mood and expression than audio can provide, although it may prove to be distracting at the beginning, causing initial self-consciousness.

The purpose of recording the classes in threefold. First, it will provide an opportunity to analyse the patterns of the classroom discourse as a whole. Second, 'significant incidents' may be collected and transcribed for close microethnographic analysis. Third, it may provide material on which to base stimulated recall interviews, as described below.

5.2.3 Interviews with the learners

Interviews will be conducted with the students, and possibly the teacher, using video clips of selected incidents as a starting point for semi-structured discussion. This phase of the research aims to investigate the participants' own perceptions of and views about their experiences as class participants, their roles and their perceptions of their discourse 'rights', and their previous learning experiences. More than one round of interviews may be conducted, should the students be willing, or perhaps a focus group in addition to interviews.

5.2.4 Other sources of data

In addition to the above, there will be an attempt to gain access to additional data sources - for example bio-data related to the students, needs analysis forms, and perhaps learner diaries. There may also be opportunities to spend time with them outside class, in breaks or before or after classes. The aim is to amass a rich set of data related to the students, in order to get as complete a picture as possible of who they are, what their motivations are, and how they see themselves in relation to the group. These sources of additional data will be dependent to a large extent on the degree of interest the students have in the study, and their willingness to chat informally in addition to completing forms or diaries. The course itself, its aims, syllabus and structure, and perhaps the teacher's lesson plans, will also be important reference points.

5.3 Rationale for not coding

The decision *not* to use a coding instrument for data collection has been made for the following reasons:

(i) At the heart of the investigation is the view that the social life of the classroom is essentially non-static - the study aims to develop an account of what is seen as a shifting, dynamic, evolving entity. For this reason it was felt that a more narrative form of data collection would be more appropriate - a format which may reflect more adequately the chronological ordering of events - telling the 'story' of the development of a group.

(ii) As the study is focused on process, it does not aim to establish or test cause-and-effect relationships between variables, nor does it hope to generalise findings to other classes using statistical tests of significance, although it may generate implications. Its premise is that although classrooms in general may exhibit common features, each one is unique, as its culture is the result of the contributions of its particular participants. For these reasons, there is no motivation to isolate and quantify variables through the use of a coding system, at least in order to employ inferential statistics. As Nunan points out, '... not all ethnography is out to ascribe such causal relationships, and so the problems which beset the quantitative researcher in a field setting become unimportant.' (1992:54).

(iii) The study aims to be holistic, and so does not isolate particular behaviours and features of the surrounding discourse at the data collection stage. As the essence of the study is the notion of co-creation of an unfolding mini-culture by the participants, this emphasis on interconnectedness and the importance of discoursal context make the isolation, categorisation and quantification of individual utterances or behaviours seem less relevant to the research aims (Van Lier 1988). An attempt to record and analyse them in isolation from the discourse in

which they are embedded, would, in this study, render them meaningless, as the focus is very strongly on the relationships between the participants and how these are expressed and developed in the discourse, as pointed out by Delamont and Hamilton (1984), in their discussion of the drawbacks of coding systems.

(iv) As the class is seen as being unique, the absence of a coding instrument may leave the researcher more open to perceptions of how that class is developing. As an attempt is being made to gain access to the participants' perceptions of the ongoing classroom process, a coding system could risk artificially structuring the researcher's perceptions during observations, potentially 'blinkering' her to events which do not fit neatly into pre-ordained categories. Nunan comments on this:

> Rather than subscribing to a belief in external 'truth', ethnographers believe that human behaviour cannot be understood without incorporating into the research the subjective belief systems of those involved in the research, both as researchers and subjects. (Nunan: loc.cit.)

(v) Finally, the type of phenomena being investigated do not lend themselves to easy categorisation. In order to account adequately for the subtle changes in the norms of the group, the researcher may be required to refer to intangibles and slippery concepts such as atmosphere, facial expression, tone of voice, and so on. A non-structured format of data collection allows the observer the freedom to give a 'richer' description of the process, which in the context of this study seems to be more useful.

All these five arguments relate, in the first instance at least, to the data collection phase, which is the immediate concern. Some of the arguments have undoubted force at the data analysis stage too, but decisions about this stage have yet to be taken, and the possibility of employing some form of coding - in the widest sense, perhaps including Goffmann's 'frames' (1974) - is not ruled out.

6. Research on individual and class academic cultures: Singapore (Parveen Sandhu)

6.1 Introduction

This section relates to a study of two first-year secondary school English language classes in Singapore, using an ethnographically-influenced approach. The discussion covers why and how data was gathered without the use of coding, as well as some of the issues that led to the use of coding during data analysis.

The purpose of the study is, firstly, to investigate how individual academic cultures (or cultures of learning) manifest themselves in the behaviour of teachers and learners during their English language lessons (over a period of three weeks), and, secondly, to consider how these different cultures work towards a gradual co-construction of the general academic culture of each of the two classes.

Research questions shape methodology, and in this case this meant that the ethnographic nature of the study, as well as its topic of classroom culture, called for data collection that would allow for the generation of rich and thick descriptions. Data was thus collected using classroom observations that involved note-making as well as audio-recording, student and teacher interviews, student questionnaires, student journal entries and student compositions (done as assignments). In the rest of this discussion, I will describe how classroom observations were carried out, and explain why I chose not to code.

6.2 The reasons for not coding during data collection

I wanted to create thorough and comprehensive descriptions of individual academic cultures and general classroom academic culture. Dey, quoting Denzin, says that such a description would encompass 'the context of an act, the intentions of the actor, and the process in which action is embedded' (Dey 1993:31).

I wanted to avoid entering the class with pre-defined notions of what ought to constitute individual and class academic cultures. Such researcher notions or preconceptions are invariably built into data-gathering instruments that involve coding. I sought to uncover an emic perspective, and therefore need to avoid using etic, or outsider-imposed categories in the form of coding. What was needed was a methodology that 'captures the mutual synchronisation of behaviour to provide an adequate ethnography of classroom life, not one that simply tabulates frequencies'. (Mehan 1979:11).

Like Hammersley (1986), and Mehan (1979), I find collecting data through systematic observations (or through the use of quantification schemes) incompatible with the intentions of my study. This is because the use of coding would usually ignore the temporal and spatial context in which the data is collected. Coding is also usually concerned with overt, observable behaviour, and this would neglect other less observable but potentially meaningful features. As such, the interrelationship of verbal and nonverbal behaviour becomes difficult to explore. Codes place arbitrary boundaries on continuous phenomena, obscuring the flux of social interaction. They also force observers to make discrete choices among categories.

Like Dey, I believe that '...any "data", regardless of method, are in fact "produced" by the researchers,' and so 'collecting data always involves selecting data.' (Dey 1993:15). The pre-specification of categories in the form of codes would determine what is discovered by the research, as concern with specifying and counting observable indicators can lead to only those things being researched. In my desire to minimise data production, I thus chose not to code as I collected data during classroom observation. During my first few days, my focus was wide - as I believed that starting my study by casting the net far and wide would allow what was unique to the particular context to surface and so direct the study into a more narrow focus. In this way, I hoped to avoid pre-determining what would be discovered by the study.

6.3 Classroom observations

I entered the research context with a 'shopping list' of sorts which displayed the various ways in which a student or teacher's academic culture could manifest itself. However, upon entry, I did not refer to this list as I was gradually caught up in observing and describing classroom behaviour. I made notes about participant movement and other physical description - i.e. what the audio-recorder could not capture. I aimed for a fly-on-the-wall status, but realised that my presence would never really go unnoticed - especially by the teacher.

In all I observed and recorded 12 lessons with one class, and 16 with the other.

6.4 Data analysis and coding

The strength of an approach can very often be its weakness as well. As already mentioned, not coding during data collection was seen as central to the approach and focus of the study. However, data not captured in codes would without doubt be difficult to analyse. Faced with masses of raw data, I had to find a way of converting it all into readable and digestible continuous prose while remaining true to what was originally observed. The data had to be summarised in a systematic and objective way so as to minimise both researcher-subjectivity and researcher data production. I aimed to construct a write-up which would be sufficiently objective and reliable and therefore credible to readers, such that my summary of the data would approximate as closely as possible to someone else's.

Continuous prose is based on generated accounts of typical sequences and patterns. In order to identify the typical pattern (or any pattern at all), I first had to analyse the data for the range of the phenomena being examined. To identify sequences and patterns, I drew up categories, and counted the number of times a certain phenomenon occurred. This allowed me to know what was more typical or common in one class, apart from bringing to the analysis a degree of systematicity in demonstrating how the data had been reduced. In summary, bits of data were put into categories, which were themselves then collapsed to form more general categories in some cases, or, in others, divided into more specific ones. In this manner, descriptive statistics were used with the intention of thickening the eventual description of individual and general (class) academic culture. What was done is in tune with what Dey says about description and analysis:

> Description lays the basis for analysis, but analysis also lays the basis for further description. Through analysis, we can obtain a fresh view of our data. We can progress from initial description, through the process of breaking the data down into bits, and seeing how these bits interconnect, to a new account based on our reconceptualisation of the data. We break down the data in order to classify it, and the concepts we create or employ in classifying the data, and the connections we make between these concepts, provide the basis for a fresh description. (1993:30)

Thus, while coding was not used during data collection, it was seen as important during data analysis.

7. Research on role relationships: Pennsylvania (Manel Lacorte)

7.1 Introduction

This section describes research analysing the nature of role relationships between teachers and learners in classrooms of Spanish as a Foreign Language, with special attention to the teachers' views about these relationships. The courses involved in the study were conducted during the academic year 1997-1998 in four high schools - three public and one private - and a private liberal-arts college, all in Pennsylvania, USA.

In the past few years, the world of second language education has shown an increasing interest in classroom management and environment, due in part to the development of learner-centred approaches to language teaching and learning (Nunan 1988, Tudor 1993, 1996). Some authors have reported on the different roles adopted by teachers and learners within both institutional and classroom contexts (see e.g. Widdowson 1987; Wright 1987, 1990; Richards & Lockhart 1994). My study attempts to broaden the understanding of role relationships through a direct and systematic observation of what goes on in the language classroom, as a specific social and cultural event created and experienced by its participants (see e.g. Breen 1985, Prabhu 1992, Coleman 1996, Sandhu in this paper).

7.2 Data collection

Based on this background, my methodological procedures and techniques attempt to conform to the dynamic nature of the processes taking place in the classroom setting. The concept of 'triangulation' as 'the inspection of different kinds of data, different methods, and a variety of research tools' (van Lier 1988:13) informs my use of a number of dimensions for the analysis of issues such as interaction, management, or socialisation in the language classroom. I have employed five different data collection methods: interviews, on-site and retrospective observations, stimulated recall, and teacher journals. Other complementary sources are a background description of the academic and institutional contexts of the schools, and my own research journal.

An ethnographic approach to the three rounds of interviews is intended to attain a gradual understanding of the teachers' experience and behaviour with regard to their work (Spradley 1979).

The first interview - before the beginning of the school year - provides information about (a) the academic and professional background of the teachers, and (b) their perceptions towards learners of Spanish as a Foreign Language and their own teaching. The purpose of the second interview - halfway through the period of classroom observations - is to learn more about the domains in which the teachers organise their views about learners and teaching, this time in connection with the courses under study as well. Once the observations have ended, the third interview explores the dimensions of meaning employed by the teachers to characterise the above-mentioned issues. This interview includes the use of the stimulated recall technique, by which the teachers are asked to comment on transcripts of occurrences recorded during the observations.

While the data from the interviews come from particular encounters with the teachers, the journals supply information about teaching experiences described at an individual level in the course of the investigation. The classroom observations account for the interaction between the teachers and the learners within the classroom context, contributing to the discovery of issues other than those brought out in the interviews and the journals. Also, the implementation of two types of nonparticipant classroom observation - on-site and retrospective - allows me to (a) collect data on the verbal and nonverbal behaviour of teachers and learners, and (b) complement these data with other relevant aspects of the classroom environment, such as changes in its physical organisation, and any unexpected occurrences during the instruction.

The first column in the 'On-site Observation' sheet contains the episodes within the lesson selected for coding - the instructional stages in which the teachers organise their teaching: e.g. presenting new content (PR), giving instructions for the activities (IN), providing feedback after the activities (FE), etc. I code these stages with their abbreviations, including the on-site time at which they occurred. In a third and wider column, I record the nonverbal behaviour of the teachers during the lesson, the nonverbal interaction between teachers and learners during the transitions between stages, and any unexpected occurrences. Other characteristics of the nonverbal behaviour of each teacher can be included as they become more apparent in the observations. For this reason, although the description focuses on body motions - hand gestures, nods, shrugs, etc. - and the degree of physical proximity, it does not follow a pre-determined set of features in order to "identify, elaborate, and refine analytic insights from and for the interpretation of data" (Emerson et al. 1995:151).

I incorporate the data from the on-site observation into another sheet - 'Retrospective Observation' - which includes another column for the utterances recorded during the periods of transition between the instructional stages. My initial assumption was that a detailed description of the teachers' nonverbal and verbal behaviour during these transitions would provide me with relevant information about teacher/learner relationships. The transitions were determined from (a) the boundary moves by which one or more individuals indicate the beginning and the end of a stage, and (b) the verbal and/or nonverbal reactions to the above moves. Later on in my observation I decided to analyse relevant instances of change within the stages with regard to the interaction between the participants, even though these changes do not lead to a transition to a different instructional stage - e.g. a teacher scolding two students talking during an individual activity.

7.3 Some thoughts on the place of coding

The use of different data collection methods for this study attempts to move beyond the traditional classifications of roles for both teachers and learners. Instead, the purpose is to achieve a comprehensive description of the dynamic nature of role relationships in the classroom that could deepen our knowledge of (a) the conventions, norms, and behaviours defining the language classroom as a specific social setting; (b) the discourse uttered in a L2 classroom; and (c) moment-by-moment aspects of classroom management and classroom environment. Within this framework, the use of a coding system in my investigation allows me to gather information about the characteristics of the interaction between the participants in the language classroom setting. More specifically, the analysis

of the periods of transition between the instructional stages provides a precise account of the verbal and nonverbal interaction in the classroom when the teacher - or the learner(s) - resolves to move forward from one stage to the next, a process that involves a variable degree of (non)linguistic and interpersonal negotiation between participants.

The combination of coding with the other methods for the collection and analysis of data in this investigation may facilitate the understanding of role relationships in the L2 classroom as long as (a) each of the methods has a relevant purpose and a consistent design; (b) potential limitations inherent in implementing each method have been taken into consideration before and during the research; and (c) there is a clear account of the procedures followed in the organisation and analysis of data originating from diverse institutional, academic, and personal contexts.

8. Research on 'fluency classes': Edinburgh (Brian Parkinson)

8.1 Introduction

This section relates to research more fully reported in Gilroy, Fraser, Parkinson & Benson (1997). The three last-named authors participated in the lesson observation.

Unlike the research described above, this was not part of individual higher-degree (Ph.D.) work, but of the IALS programme of internally funded collaborative research. The aims of this programme include teacher development and curriculum evaluation as well as deepening general understanding of language teaching and learning. Our project related to afternoon fluency classes, sometimes in the form of special interest groups (see 8.2 below), lasting 5 hours per week, as part of a General English course of 20 hours per week. Students on this course are adults (mostly 18-30), of many nationalities and all levels, staying from 3 to (usually) 33 weeks in classes of (usually) 6 to 12 students.

The lesson observation part of the research consisted of 16 lessons taught by 5 teachers and coded by 3 observers. All the observers are also teachers on the course, though one was not regularly teaching on it at the time of the study.

8.2 Rationale for the observation, and problems resulting from a change of plan

The observation system was tailor-made for the special-interest groups which were due to run in May-June 1996 (having previously run in December 1995). In these classes, students work together to produce an end-product - a magazine, a video programme or a play - and the teacher is supposed to withdraw, to a greater or lesser extent, in the hope that this will force the students to interact for real purposes, to develop problem-solving techniques, interaction strategies, etc. The underlying research questions were stated as follows in the research proposal:

> Do students accept the responsibility for producing a specific product before a definite deadline? How is their acceptance, or non-acceptance, manifested in attendance, punctuality, preparation outside class, self-starting behaviour within class?
>
> How are turns distributed? Do all students get a reasonable share, in terms of quantity and quality? If not, why not? If so, how is this achieved - e.g. turn getting/stealing/offering? Does the requirement to produce a definite product within a definite deadline seem to encourage, discourage or have no effect on behaviour in this area?
>
> How teacher-dependent are the students? Do they expect teachers to solve problems for them, or intervene in other ways? If so which problems, which ways? If teachers refuse to intervene, what is the result?
>
> Are there periods of silence and/or unproductivity, for some or all students? Are they a problem? How are they terminated?

What kind of language do the students use, in functional/cognitive terms? Is there any indication that the requirements of the task encourage the use of a wider range than in a 'typical' language lesson - e.g. more speculation, planning, initiations, examining alternatives? (N.B.: As there is no control group and no rigorous measurement, any comparisons with other kinds of class will have to be speculative and based on impression.)

How, if at all, do all the above change over time?

Are the tasks actually completed, e.g. the magazine 'published'? What are the reasons for, and effects of, success and failure in task completion?

A serious problem arose when it became clear that (for reasons unconnected with the research) these special classes would not in fact be offered in May-June 1996, and that 'normal' General English afternoon classes would run instead. Research team members felt for a time that, because of this change, the observation should not go ahead, but a counter-argument was that the original focus was the afternoon classes in general, not the special interest groups: as the proposal says (Section 2.2):

> The [special interest] programme is different in some surface respects from 'normal' afternoon classes, but is intended to have the same underlying objectives and language focus, and is in some ways a particularly clear-cut example (and test) of their basic philosophy.

We recognised that some elements in the observation system might be less applicable than expected, but thought that coders could make common-sense adjustments. We do accept, however, that the change of focus leads to some problems of research logic.

8.3 The observation system

The lesson observation proforma consists of six pages. The observer is expected to use these pages in sequence, as follows:-

0-5 minutes	No coding or comments - observer can get his/her bearings
5-10 minutes	'Open' comments using Page 1
10-15 minutes	Coding with Page 2
15-20 minutes	'Open' comments using Page 3
20-25 minutes	Coding with Page 4
25-30 minutes	'Open' comments using Page 5
30-35 minutes	Coding with Page 6
35-40 minutes	'Open' comments using Page 1

etc.

This pattern continues until 95 minutes, which should be about 5 minutes before the end of the lesson. On pages 1, 3 and 5, notes on events particularly relevant to that page, but occurring when the page is not in scheduled use, can be made, if time allows, in the 'other/general' section.

Pages 2, 4 and 6 are designed for detailed coding. In principle, codings can be made for every student every ten seconds, if one of the categories on the page occurs. In practice, it was recognised that coding in this detail would not always be possible, and coders were advised to use conventions such as the following (details were left to individuals):

- arrows where many codings would be the same, specifically:
  - vertical arrows where all or several students are doing the same thing.
  - horizontal arrows where one student does the same thing for an extended period.
  - diagonal arrows in all four directions where one coding covers all or several students for an extended period.
- shading to indicate where, especially in group work, certain students were not listened to at a particular time, and white space where (on pages 4 and 6) students were listened to but none of the codeable behaviours occurred.

Pages 1, 3 and 5 are intended for more 'qualitative', or 'impressionistic', or 'open' comments relevant to the general topic in the title of each page. It was hoped that observers would thus be able to 'recover' from the pressure of second-by-second coding, and also to give the kinds of reaction not easily reduced to a coding system.

Space precludes further description of Sheet 3 ('Silence/Apparent Unproductivity'), Sheet 4 ('Turn-taking'), Sheet 5 ('Miscellaneous') and Sheet 6 ('Negotiation'). The general principles of the system can, however, be seen from Sheets 1 and 2, which we reproduce on the following pages.

Sheet 2 was completed almost exactly as intended, and filled with letters, arrows, etc. A last-minute change, after a trial coding, was to use 'S' (speaking) and 'W' (writing) instead of the vague category 'A' - we decided that thinking was unobservable!

Sheet 1 usually produced about three one-line comments per five-minute period; a random sample follows:

"Whole class. Students giving ideas to each other"
"Student 6 talking to student 5 in Japanese"
"Student 2 asks to tell anecdote, then writes on board"
"Students getting on with task without teacher help"
"Student 4 using dictionary. Teacher discourages this."

Several months after data collection, the completed sheets were used by the three original observers to write up three continuous-prose accounts of the observed lessons. These accounts can be found in the project report.

8.4 To code or (sometimes) not - reasons for a mixed system and post-research conclusions

Any attempt to give the original reasons for a researcher's methodological choices is fraught with danger: some reasons are usually explicit or implicit in a research proposal, but to go beyond this may involve, if not (self-) deception, then at least making clear and simple what was actually fuzzy and multiple. The rest of this section includes what I perceive to be the original reasons, but is perhaps better understood as an account of 'past reasons as presently seen'. I speak only for myself, not for the co-writers either of this paper or of the project report (Gilroy, Fraser, Parkinson & Benson, op. cit.).

The (or some) reasons for <u>not</u> coding on Sheets 1, 3 and 5 are easiest to state. Most important are those given in Section 3 of this paper, especially the seven points from Mehan. It was also important not to overburden the teacher-observers with continuous coding, especially as training time was limited, nor to alienate them by constant use of a system of which they had no 'ownership'. More positively, the open-ended comments allowed them to put things their way, to use their professional expertise, to afford future readers a (very loosely) 'ethnographic' insight into their perspective. Previous experience on a similar project, mentioned above (Davies and Parkinson 1996), had suggested that teacher-observers were less comfortable with coding than with non-coding observation.

The reasons <u>for</u> coding on Sheets 2, 4 and 6 are less clear-cut. They undoubtedly included simple familiarity - doing what seems normal or recognised. More positively, the fact that this was team research provided several reasons: a coding system can perhaps give a clearer focus; can yield more objectivity, or at least intersubjectivity; can help the various researchers to look at and for the same things, to compare

GEPM PROJECT 1996

LESSON CODING SHEET: PAGE 1 (Teacher-dependence/independence)

Lesson No: **Date:** **Teacher:** **Coder:**

Exact Starting Time: **(Take coding times from this).**

5-10 minutes

35-40 minutes

65-70 minutes

Other/General

Note to Coders Make comments for the 5-minute periods specified and optionally for other times where possible. See also paragraph 3 of research proposal.

GEPM PROJECT 1996

LESSON CODING SHEET: PAGE 2 ("On Task")

Lesson No.: **Date:** **Teacher:** **Coder:**
Exact Starting Time: **(coding times start from this)**

	Min	10	11	12	13	14		40	41	42
Name	SecX10	012345	012345	012345	012345	012345		012345	012345	012345
1.										
2.										
3.										
4.										
5.										
6.										
7.										
8.										
9.										
10.										
11.										
12.										
13.										
14.										
(Teacher Led?)										

	Min	43	44		70	71	72	73	74
Name	SecX10	012345	012345		012345	012345	012345	012345	012345
1.									
2.									
3.									
4.									
5.									
6.									
7.									
8.									
9.									
10.									
11.									
12.									
13.									
14.									
(Teacher Led?)									

Key: A = clearly active on pedagogic task, e.g. speaking, writing, thinking.
L = clearly or probably listening (but not A).
R = clearly or probably reading (but not A and not L).
N = doing something apparently not pedagogic, including L1 talk.
O = apparently doing nothing purposive
T = talks in English but clearly not on task (marked form).
Add O in bottom row if an activity is not teacher led, 1 if it is
? = unclear or not recorded

lessons, to use a common language. The aim of avoiding blandness - see 4(i) - was undoubtedly present, as also was the need to distinguish this observation clearly from the observations for training and/or evaluation also sometimes carried out in General English classes, e.g. with trainees on the Diploma in English Language Teaching. Finally, it was felt that a research report including the 'hard' evidence from coding would be more acceptable and accessible to potential readers, including those in authority.

Final opinions on the research design can be more confidently stated than original reasons. Feedback from readers, including General English teachers and IALS management, was limited but wholly favourable. The opinions of the three observers were sought through informal interview or, in my own case, recorded in a 'researcher's log', and were likewise fairly favourable, as the following agreed summaries show:

> Sue Fraser: "In principle the combination of coding and other methods was fine. In detail the coding sheets didn't match due to changes in timetable".
>
> Cathy Benson: "I thought the combination was very good. Coding is best for dealing with what you've thought about before, the other part leaves room for what you've not thought about before, so both are necessary".
>
> Brian Parkinson: "I felt I tended to skimp a little on the coding (perhaps due to over-familiarity with such systems), relying too much on general impression rather than precise counting. But the system worked well, and would have worked even better if fully used".

For me (as researcher), the mixed design used in the fluency class research now seems the most practicable and also the most valid, avoiding or at least mitigating all the problems listed in Section 4 above, and winning acceptance of conclusions, especially by observed teachers and by funders (management), to an extent which would have been unlikely for a pure coding or pure non-coding approach. This very acceptance, though, may suggest a weakness: such a compromise, consensual approach is unlikely to startle, to challenge, to open up totally new pathways.

9. Overall conclusions

Our paper has illustrated four different approaches to the issue of 'to code or not to code'. None seems to us inherently better or worse; all seem reasonable solutions to a particular set of research needs. Differences in the general context of and motivation for research (e.g. individual versus institutional), and consequently in the envisaged audience, are among many potentially important variables.

All of us have felt the need to incorporate the participants' (i.e. teachers' and/or learners') perspective. We have done this in three main ways: Lacorte by multiple data collection instruments and triangulation; Parkinson mainly by involving the teachers as researchers; Sandhu and Gourlay by two different kinds of ethnographically influenced 'thick description', as well as triangulation. These methods of incorporation seem to us potentially complementary.

Three of us have used some coding: Lacorte during and after observation, Parkinson only during, Sandhu only after. We think we have done so in ways which avoid the worst pitfalls of sociometric coding. The fourth, Gourlay, has offered five arguments against coding at the data collection stage. We all find these arguments valid for research which concentrates on a 'classroom culture', but not necessarily for other types of research, or even for this type at other stages.

Note:

1 The four authors each wrote the section bearing their name, and contributed ideas to the general sections. Brian Parkinson is responsible for the overall structure and final editing.

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*EWEB*UATION

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Abstract

This paper describes a project which has the objective of evaluating Web resources for language learning. Issues of quality of Web resources, the need for an evaluation procedure and the difficulties in implementing it are discussed first. The development of criteria on which to base such an evaluation is then outlined, followed by a description of its implementation on a Web page which indexes Spanish resources.

1. Introduction

Web resources for language learning/teaching have started to proliferate at an extraordinary rate. Some of these resources are specifically designed for language learning or teaching, e.g. tutorials, reading comprehension exercises, grammar references, dictionaries etc. Others are seen as resources for language learning/teaching exploitation, such as newspapers, radio stations, virtual museums, tourist information centres, etc. Most language learning Web sites at universities, language centres or international language organisations provide Web pages with links to these Web resources. Their webmasters index all these sites under different headings and sub-headings according to different languages and/or topics, e.g. grammar, media, culture, etc. Thus, these 'collection-of-links' pages are seen as launch pads to other sites on the Web, as they bring together different types of resources which can be accessed from one site.

A collection of links is one way of concentrating the power of the Web as a teaching/learning aid by centralising resources which might best address the diversity of learning needs which our students may have. At the same time it helps learners and teachers in their Web browsing, focusing their attention on useful resources without wasting too much time. Therefore, **classification** of Web resources allows for ease of reference and readiness of access, and helps indirectly to integrate the Web into the language curriculum.

Though classification is essential, it is not in itself sufficient. It is true that the simple fact of selecting sites is an unconscious way of evaluating since we try to choose what we think can be of value for our own learners to be included on our respective Web pages. However, to date, on most of the Web pages which collect links to language-specific Web resources, there is no advice on the quality and usefulness of accessing the links provided. At most, they provide a summary of what one can find in following a link. What we propose here is a way of evaluating language-learning Web sites in a systematic and explicit way in order to enhance their pedagogical value.

The Web has a lot to offer, but not all sources are equally valuable or even reliable. Most of the language resources on the Web are generally unfiltered, unlike most print materials which have been evaluated by an editorial team. A need, therefore, exists for the development of an **evaluation** procedure that will assist learners and teachers to assess the value of language learning/teaching Web sites and for pedagogical and technical criteria to guide their future designs.

A project, called Ewe*b*uation, was established at the Institute for Applied Language Studies, University of Edinburgh, to develop such an evaluation procedure and to put it into practice using a Web page indexing Spanish language learning resources. As a consequence, a rating system has been developed to provide information which guides our learners in understanding the limitations or advantages of following a link. This rating system is in the form of stars placed next to a link. The user can click the star(s) and then see a detailed description of the evaluation results for that particular Web site.

2. Preliminary considerations

There are already services on the Web that evaluate and rate certain sites. Symbols and logos at the bottom of homepages are beginning to spring up saying "awarded 3 stars by Magellan", "Top 5% of the Web", etc. However, this is of limited value since most of the time we do not know the criteria they follow, and even when stated these criteria do not differentiate any subject domain or audience. To provide more valuable rating systems we should consider the context and focus on specific subjects, in our case CALL. All-purpose rating systems only produce a perceived value which in essence means nothing. Some search engines, however, include review sections by subject specialists in various areas of expertise, but their implementation of the evaluations is frequently superficial, subjective or biased.

The problems of low quality and credibility of Web resources, and the need for coherent evaluation procedures, have already been suggested by several librarians (Alexander & Tate, 1997; Tillman, 1997; Grassian, 1997) and by some educators (Schrock 1996; Kirk 1996; Wilkinson *et al.* 1997) who are trying to develop sets of criteria and evaluation surveys which will help learners and teachers to critically evaluate information on the Web. Ewe*b*uation is in line with these studies but specifically addressed to language learning.

Ewe*b*uation should be understood here as formative evaluation (Rea-Dickins & Germaine, 1992:26), i.e. intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of language learning material on the Web. Such evaluation allows for raising awareness of the learning process in a formal way and thus for developing the evaluators' critical thinking. This is an important skill to be developed due to the vast and varied information available on the Web.

At present, there are still limitations on interaction using the Web for language learning. Bush (1996) states that the traditional HTML model is "limited in its ability to provide such simple interactions as answer judging as we often see in interactive material. This click and branch methodology is fine for accessing reference materials but is limited in its application to tutorials" (1996:2). However, Web technology is evolving dramatically and some materials are beginning to use program languages, such as CGI Scripts, JavaScript and Java, which allow a higher level of interactivity. It is true that the problem of speed of interaction due to limited bandwidth still remains: "the delays of learner's click and the subsequent response (the system latency) can be disconcerting" (Bush, loc.cit:2), if not tedious, depending on the Web system used. New technologies will soon solve these problems and language teachers will then be able to make highly interactive Web materials. Therefore, parameters by which to judge Web resources will also change since the technology will have evolved and our expectations will be more demanding.

Web technology has not yet reached the same level of maturity as multimedia technology, and so we must not fall into the trap of evaluating Web resources taking multimedia technology as the point of reference. Comparisons with other media cannot be the best way forward. What we need to judge is the medium itself as it is now, with all its limitations, in relation to the learner and the learning context. That said, however, evaluation procedures designed for printed material and CALL software were a source of inspiration in identifying possible evaluation criteria for language learning Web resources.

The Web provides a flexible medium for publishing language learning materials since it easily allows for revisions and updated versions. Through e-mail, for instance, an author can obtain direct feedback from learners and teachers on how they make use of his/her pages, and can improve them accordingly without going through the painful re-editing of printed material. In that sense, the very dynamic nature of the Web calls for formative evaluations, of which the Web author can easily take advantage.

On the other hand, the fact that the Web is a continually evolving environment also poses problems in terms of the durability of the evaluations. For instance, once a site has been evaluated it has a "sell-by date" since the author could implement changes after receiving feedback from the users, so making the evaluation no longer valid; or even worse, an evaluation of a site might have been posted minutes before an updated version of that site is going online. This underlines the fact that evaluation of Web resources has to be understood as an ongoing process.

Evaluation, in the educational setting, is sometimes perceived as a threatening procedure and always has the potential to be controversial. The main reason for this is that when evaluating we are judging against specific criteria which are based on the evaluators' own approach to, in our case, CALL, and on their own learning context. These may not necessarily agree with one's particular beliefs and situation. Thus, the evaluation framework stated below is determined by the context of the evaluation which is being implemented. However, with this in mind, we have attempted to identify criteria as comprehensible and universal as possible for the majority of CALL situations.

3. Evaluation framework

The following framework is intended to outline the purpose and method of the evaluation process. This will allow anyone involved in the evaluation and anyone reading it to be clear about issues of why, what, who and how.

3.1 Objectives

The main objectives were:

- to start a process which is desperately needed due to the wealth of information available, some of which is a "tremendous amount of garbage - sites that are redundant, disconnected, unprofessional, irrelevant" (Green 1997:256).
- to make learners and teachers realise that Web resources need to be looked at critically.
- to assist learners and teachers to evaluate their quality

and ultimately:

- to motivate discussion in the profession in order to improve the quality of the language resources on the Web.

3.2 The evaluators

Traditionally, evaluations of materials are carried out either by teachers, e.g. when selecting appropriate textbooks or software for their learners, or by students, e.g. at the end of the course. The Web allows for a more co-operative kind of evaluation where both learners and teachers can work together.

In our case, both teachers' and learners' points of view are taken into consideration in order to give a more coherent and balanced evaluation. Each party is actively engaged in the evaluation process more

or less at the same time. Both will answer the same questions so that it will make it easier to analyse them statistically. This does not mean that we are unaware that learners and teachers have different interests and different experiences. However, these will be reflected in their answers and thus possible differences spelled out. In that sense we could later study the reasons and consequences for those differences. Other positive reasons for involving students are that the evaluation procedure could develop learners' critical thinking and reasoning skills, and may also be a means of increasing their awareness of what is useful for them as language learners and be, thereby, a form of learner training.

IALS Modern Language learners are adult students with various professions, e.g. teachers, university students, lawyers, secretaries, bank clerks, etc. and usually highly motivated. They have a two-hour language session once a week for three terms, which means 66 hours per academic year. Age ranges from 18 to over 70. Students who took part in the project were volunteers from Beginners to Advanced, most of whom were computer-literate, with some experience in using the Web.

3.3 The Web resources

We are evaluating Spanish learning related Web sites indexed into the following sections:

- **Lessons**: Sites designed to teach Spanish, mainly courses and tutorials.
- **Practice**: Web sites designed to provide practice on different language skills or language systems.
- **Reference**: i.e. dictionaries, grammars, vocabulary lists, etc.

The difference between the first two categories is sometimes blurred since some courses are designed focusing mainly on one aspect of language learning. Besides, their main objective is the same: to provide an environment through which the learner can improve his/her language skills. The difference of classification is one of emphasis and structure. The first section covers sites more related to the traditional structure of a textbook, generally integrating different aspects of language learning, whereas the second includes sites designed specifically to tackle one aspect of language learning.

3.4 Criteria

What is it that makes a 'good practice' language learning Web site? The first step is to identify clearly the criteria by which we judge whether a Web site is very good, acceptable or bad. Any evaluation should be undertaken according to certain guiding principles using carefully defined criteria. However, when faced with a new medium, identifying the criteria is not an easy task since the designer and the user are inexperienced and still experimenting on how best to use it.

One of the priorities when developing the criteria was to restrict these to the essential and the very general. It was perceived that identifying lots of detailed criteria was not going to assist the evaluators but confuse them. The different criteria identified for the evaluation are:

CRITERION 1: **Quality and usefulness of the material**

This criterion refers to forming judgements about how valuable for one's learning process the resource on the Web is. We need to consider to what extent the purpose of the site meets the learners' needs.

CRITERION 2: **Coverage**

This criterion deals with the depth and breadth of the content provided. The main issue to be considered is the level of detail the resource provides. This should be appropriate and balanced for the purpose of the Web site and its intended user. It should be made clear that more does not necessarily mean better.

CRITERION 3: **Userfriendliness**

The usability of a Web site is dependent on how well it is designed following basic instructional design standards. This criterion deals with the aesthetics of the design, the structure and organisation of the resource and the navigation of the content, i.e. how easily the resource can be explored.

CRITERION 4: **Motivating**

This criterion is concerned with how engaging a Web site is and thereby deals with the affective dimension of the learning process.

CRITERION 5: **Promoting active learning**

This criterion is related to the concept of interactivity. In the computer world interactivity is understood as simply clicking a link or selecting an option. In that sense, most resources on the Web are "interactive" in that the user can decide what to see and where to go. In an educational setting, however, the concept of interactivity should go beyond this. An educational interactive resource should require some sort of output on the part of the user. In that respect, our definition coincides with that of Lafford *et al.*, (1997:221) : "*interactive* refers to an interactivity that requires oral or written production in the target language". In order not to confuse the evaluators, the criterion was entitled "promoting active learning", which means that learners should have an opportunity to receive input and produce output in the target language. This criterion is thought to be essential for the development of pedagogically sound language Web resources.

CRITERION 6: **Feedback**

This criterion is reserved for resources which provide tasks and/or exercises. It deals with the quality of the feedback provided, if any.

Because of the language learning Web site categories' differing functions, the **Lessons** and **Practice section** are evaluated following the 6 criteria, whereas the criteria assigned to sites in the **Reference section** are restricted to the first three. For instance, an online dictionary is rated by taking into account its quality, coverage and usability. Though some learners could find dictionaries motivating (criterion 4), it could be said that an online dictionary's aim is not to motivate learners to learn a language, but simply one of support and reference.

To assist the evaluators to clarify the meaning of each criterion and avoid possible misunderstandings, a handout with explanations was provided. Under each criterion open questions were outlined in order to make the evaluators reflect upon different aspects that characterise the corresponding criterion (see Appendix I). These questions serve as indicators of quality.

3.5 Procedure

The E*web*uation project was conducted in five stages, as described below:

The first stage was to draw up a list of Web sites that might be useful for our students.

The second stage was to classify them in a way that was clear for the learner (see 3.3), and to design the Web page with the links to these sites.

The third stage was the preparation for the evaluation, i.e. thinking about and designing an evaluation procedure to rate language Web sites. The evaluative procedure chosen was a questionnaire which reflects the criteria stated. The evaluator had to rate each criterion on a 5-point scale, from excellent to poor, for each site. This questionnaire was intended to be online but for technical reasons and due to time constraints it had to be administered using handouts (see Appendix II).

The fourth stage was to collect the data. A special week was organised for volunteer students to come along and take part in the project. Some decided that they wanted to take part but preferred to do it in their own time since they had access to the Web. These learners returned answered questionnaires by post. Teachers were briefed about the project on an individual basis and evaluated the Web sites in their own time. To make the data relevant at this stage, evaluators were asked to concentrate on seven specific sites. Learners and teachers filled in the questionnaires and submitted their responses.

The last stage was to process the data statistically in order to rate the resources. This process resulted in the awarding of a number of stars to the different Web sites evaluated: ranging from five for an excellent Web site to one for poor Web sites. The overall score is obtained by averaging the learners' and the teachers' scores on each criterion. To see details of the score awarded to a site, a user can click on the star(s) next to the link and will obtain the averages for each criterion together with the teachers' and learners' respective comments.

As mentioned before, stages 4 and 5 were intended to be carried out online. In future, the evaluators will complete the questionnaire and submit it online and the data will be processed automatically. Some CGI programs using Perl 5.0 have been designed in order to achieve this.

3.5.1 Technical features

As far as programming is concerned, the site is divided into three main interconnected areas:

- **Output Area:**

The evaluation Web pages are generated by CGI Scripts. These pages are created with stars which rate the quality of the sites provided. Input via the questionnaire dynamically updates these Web pages.

- **Input Area:**

The questionnaire information is entered by the evaluators into a Web form which uses CGI Scripts to place the data in the associated databases. This information is later used by the output section to form the rating of the evaluated sites and by the administration section from which the data can be edited.

- **Administration Area:**

This section is divided into three parts: one that allows the addition of a new link, creating a *site database* (or adding to an existing one), and the second where the CGI scripts search the data in the databases presenting it in a form for editing and manipulating.

The last part involves security and has two aspects. The first is that the site is protected by passwords, one for the students, another for the teachers and also one for the administrator. This security measure stops (intentional or accidental) changes to 'volatile' data, e.g. a student inadvertently deleting a site

in the administration area. The second part entails checking all the links in the databases for broken, missing or moved linked pages.

The technical solutions to some of the problems that arise from the complexity of evaluating a Web site are shown below:

Problem	Technical solution
Only one evaluation is not representative enough	Evaluation is counted but stars are not shown in total score. Minimum of 5 students and 3 teachers
Outdated evaluations	User can see when the evaluation was carried out
Radical modification of a Web site	Send a message alerting to changes
URL moved	Send a message alerting that URL moved
Hacking	Password protected
Different ratings to be considered: 6 criteria 5 criteria: Sites without feedback 3 criteria: Reference sites	Identify differences and apply statistical analysis accordingly.
Learners' level biased	Indication of level of learners on the comments section

4. Evaluating Ewebuation

This project has, to a large extent, met successfully the first three objectives stated in 3.1. Five teachers took part in the evaluation, most of whom completed all the questionnaires. They have a lot of experience as language teachers but had only basic knowledge about the Web as a resource for language learning. This project helped them to realise the potential of the Web as a learning/teaching tool.

Learners' response was fairly positive. Out of 300 students of Spanish, 70 initially expressed interest in taking part. 31 came to the evaluation week to take part in the project and 25 asked for the questionnaires to be sent, 12 of whom sent them back. Some students managed to evaluate the seven sites requested, others just evaluated as many as possible in the time they had available.

None of the students or teachers reported difficulty in understanding the criteria, and all thought it was an excellent idea of which they could take advantage. Most of them praised the clear design of the Web pages.

Problems of full functionality of some sites encountered by some evaluators at certain times forced their evaluations of those sites to be postponed. Learners at home who did not have multimedia facilities could not fully evaluate some of the sites.

5. Conclusion and future possibilities

In general terms the positive feedback received so far confirms that at least we are starting off on the right foot. There are still problems to be solved and aspects to be improved. The criteria stated in the framework, for instance, should be validated by an external panel of evaluators so that they could be applied to a more extensive context. These could, then, be reviewed and re-adjusted, e.g. add more criteria not accounted for or simply more indicators under each criterion. Ewebuation is seen as just

the beginning of an ongoing project that is much needed by language learners and teachers world-wide.

In that respect, other universities may be interested in adopting a similar model, and some national or international organisations, such as the CTI in the UK or EUROCALL, may consider a project of this kind on a more universal level. What is clear is that we cannot assist our learners and teachers by just simply providing a collection of links of what is available on the Web. This could be easily achieved by the numerous search engines already available. Language centres, university departments and international organisations, apart from providing advice on how to exploit the Web, should offer further specific information in the form of reviews or rating systems that reflect 'good practice' language learning Web sites.

I hope that the evaluation model presented here will stimulate constructive discussion and have a positive washback effect which ultimately may contribute to the improvement of the present Web sites and possibly the development of a set of guidelines for the design of future quality language learning Web sites.

Notes

1. This paper was presented at the EUROCALL 97 Conference in Dublin.

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NB. It is impossible to guarantee that the URLs provided in this paper are still correct on publication.

APPENDIX 1

EVALUATING SPANISH WEBSITES
Instructions on How to Fill the Questionnaire

The following are some of the points you have to consider before you fill in each category.

Remember to answer all the questions for the sections Lessons and Practice, taking into account that question 6 is only appropriate when there are exercises to do on the website.

For the section *Reference* you ONLY have to answer the first 3 questions.

Criteria and Questions:

1. Quality and usefulness of the material:

- Does the material provide a valuable aid to language learning?
- Is the information appropriate for what you expect to find on the website?
- Is there useful information to make the site worthwhile visiting?

2. Coverage

- Is there enough information provided?
- Is there so much that it is impossible to assimilate or manage?

Dictionary: did you find the words you looked up or is it somehow limited?

3. User-friendliness

- Design: Is the design of the website attractive?
- Instructions: Are the instructions clear and comprehensible?
- Organisation: Is the website well-organised?
- Navigation: Can you move from page to page without getting lost or confused?
- Speed: Does the page downloads efficiently?

4. Motivating

Does the website:

- present material in a way that holds attention?
- stimulate interest in the subject?
- encourage learning and study?

5. Promoting active learning

Does the website ask or prompt the user to:

- do something (i.e. do some exercises, reply...)?
- take part in some way?
- interact with somebody else (i.e. author or other students)?

6. Feedback (only when there are exercises)

- Is the feedback provided helpful?
- Is a more clear or in-depth explanation necessary?

You may make any additional comments about the website in the space provided.

Remember that if you feel that you are unable to evaluate a website for any reason you can indicate this on the questionnaire sheet.

If you have any problem, e-mail: **J.Pujola@ed.ac.uk**

Thank you for your co-operation.

APPENDIX II

*Ewe*buation Questionnaire - Students / Teachers*

This form gives you an opportunity to indicate your opinion to the learning value of the Spanish links provided. Please consider each question separately, without letting your overall impression to the material blind you to particular areas of the site's strengths or weaknesses. For each question, choose the response that best reflects your personal opinion.

Please select the name of the site being evaluated here:

_____

	excellent	very good	satisfactory	poor	very poor
1. Quality and usefulness of the material:					
2. Coverage:					
3. Userfriendliness:					
4. Motivating:					
5. Promoting active learning:					
6. Feedback: (only when there are EXERCISES)					

Please add any comments you might have:

☐ I was unable to evaluate the site because _____

_____

Which level are you studying at IALS? _____

* **N.B.** The **teachers' questionnaire** was the same as learners' except for the section after the comments which only included the following question:

Which level(s) at IALS would you recommend this site for? _____

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